Peter McArthur.

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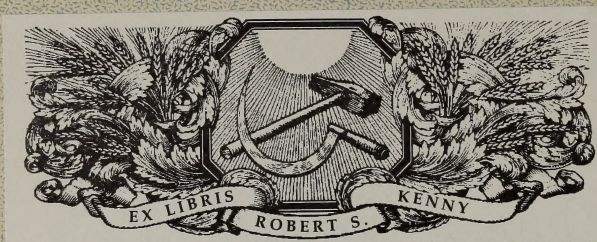

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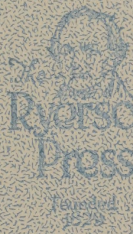
The
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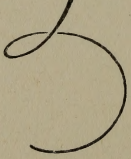
Makers of Canadian Literature
PETER McARTHUR

Makers of Canadian Literature

Lorne Albert Pierce
Editor

Victor Morin
Associate Editor
French Section

Dedicated to the writers of Canada ~ past and present ~ the real Master-builders and Interpreters of our great Dominion ~ in the hope that our People, equal heirs in the rich inheritance, may learn to know them intimately; and knowing them love them; and loving follow



PETER MCARTHUR

by

WILLIAM ARTHUR DEACON

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Peter McArthur.

BIOGRAPHICAL

PETER McARTHUR

ETER McARTHUR'S parents were both natives of Scotland. His father, Peter McArthur the elder, moved to Canada considerably before the middle of the nineteenth century, and took up land in Middlesex County, in the Province of Ontario. His mother, Catherine (McLennan) McArthur, came from Scotland some years later, married, and took up her abode on the partially cleared homestead. Here, in the log farm-house built by his father, the younger Peter was born on the 10th of March, 1866; and in this genuine pioneer dwelling he now resides. He writes*: "I have the good fortune to be living on the farm on which I was born—the farm which my father cleared. Although I was born too late to take a hand in the clearing, I learned the history of every acre before an open fireplace many years ago." As both English and Gælic

* "The Affable Stranger," p. 196.

were spoken in the home, he cannot remember the time when he could not speak both languages.

He attended the local public school until he passed his entrance to high school in 1878. He then attended the Wardsville High School for one term in 1879; and, later in the fall of the same year, went to Strathroy High School for a couple of months; but was then obliged to give up school on account of ill-health. He remained at home until the fall of 1885, when he resumed his studies at Strathroy High School.

The boy was an omnivorous reader, readily absorbing the contents of every piece of printed matter on which he could lay his hands. As his parents belonged to the Free Church of Scotland, they objected to his reading of "profane" books, and tried to confine his reading to the Bible, "Pilgrim's Progress," books of sermons and similar works. Family worship was conducted three times a day, and each time a chapter of the Bible was read in Gælic, so the lad got a thorough grounding in the Scriptures.

But young Peter's taste was all for poetry, and the first book he ever owned was a copy of Burns. Being in London one day, he was

given fifty cents by a man, who was paying for some wood that had been delivered. Usually any money that came his way went to the purchase of powder and shot, as he was fond of hunting, and did much roaming in the thick woods looking for squirrels and partridges. But on this day, being in the town where he could yield to his temptation for books, his passion for literature prevailed; and the forbidden volume was smuggled home, where it was kept hidden, and devoured in secret.

Shortly afterwards, the boy got access to the works of Byron, and committed many of the poems to memory. A brother, who had left home, passed on to Peter a subscription to the Mechanics' Institute at Glencoe; but he was forbidden by his parents to take out books. At this juncture Reverend John Ross, a minister of the Free Church, visited the family. The clergyman set himself to win the confidence of the boy who was so obviously afraid of him. The story of the hidden Burns and Byron came out, and the culprit was amazed at the coincidental discovery that Mr. Ross was himself deeply read in the classics. The upshot was that the minister persuaded Mr. and Mrs. McArthur to allow Peter to have free and uncen-

sored access to the books in the Mechanics' Institute. An orgy of reading followed. This spoiled his usefulness as a farm-worker for the time being, but aided greatly his mental development.

During this period Peter McArthur enjoyed the friendship of the late Alexander Stuart, who was then a young lawyer establishing his practice in Glencoe, and who subsequently moved to Edmonton. Mr. Stuart had been a school teacher before studying law. He was one of the founders of the Mechanics' Institute; and it was due to his sound taste in literature that the several hundred volumes now at the disposal of his young friend were as well selected as the famous "five-foot shelf" of President Elliot of Harvard. The library contained the "Moxon Red Line Series" of the poets, selections from the Elizabethan dramatists, the complete works of Scott, Dickens and Thackeray; Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, Ricardo, Malthus, Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, "Chambers' Miscellany," Macaulay's "Essays" and "History," Boswell's "Life of Johnson," Goldsmith's works, and so forth.

These books—many of which would be considered pretty "heavy" by high school students

of to-day—were read and assimilated by the ardent youth who had to walk the several miles from the farm in order to procure them. He read them all—fiction, history, essays, politcal economy and the natural sciences, with poetry always as his favourite. While reading avidly, he retained much of what he read in his tenacious memory, from which he has ever been able, on the instant, to draw rare treasures in the form of apt quotations and allusions.

One would think that the young man would have been able to keep his mind employed with this exhaustive reading course, which was kindly and ably superintended by Mr. Stuart. But no! He was also studying Geometry and Chemistry by way of a pastime. During these years, and even when attending high school in Wardsville, the fledgling author wrote anonymous paragraphs for the Glencoe *Transcript*, edited and set up by Arthur Sutherland, a schoolmate a couple of years older than himself, who had been brought up on a neighbouring farm. Peter McArthur also composed considerable verse during his hours of labour on the farm, committing the poems to writing in the evenings. None of these survived the "Dedication to Vulcan," when all poems ante-

dating the autumn of 1885 were burned by himself prior to his re-entry into Strathroy High School; but he has stated in later years that these early efforts were mostly romances and satires in imitation of Byron and Scott.

In the fall of 1885 then, he resumed his studies at Strathroy High School, and was enabled to maintain himself there for two years by mortgaging twenty-five acres of land, which he had inherited at the time of his father's death. He roomed with Charles A. Stuart, who is now a Judge of the Supreme Court of Alberta, and a brother of the late Alexander Stuart of Glencoe and Edmonton. Here also Peter McArthur became intimate with Duncan McKellar, a young man of literary taste and ability, who remained his closest chum until McKellar's early death in 1899.

In 1887 Peter McArthur matriculated for the University of Toronto, and at the same time passed creditably his examinations for second-class teacher's certificate, the two sets of tests then being separate. In the fall of 1887 he attended the Model School in Strathroy; and in the spring of 1923 he found an old letter written while there to his friend Duncan McKellar, which mentions a series of articles

which Peter McArthur had begun contributing to the Strathroy *Age*, the avowed aim being: "to describe every form of farm life." This ambition had been aroused in the young writer through the deep impression made on him by "The Farmin' Editor" sketches by Mr. E. E. Sheppard, which were published in the Toronto *News* at the time Peter McArthur was at home on the farm. The incident is significant, as it opened to him the possibilities of country life as subject matter for his writing, and supplied him with the theme which he was to use to such advantage more than twenty years later in the Toronto *Globe*. When this letter came to light recently, Peter McArthur declared he had forgotten all about both it and his contributions to the *Age*.

Peter McArthur next taught school in Caradoc for six months in the year 1888, continuing meanwhile his reading and his efforts to produce poetry. Duncan McKellar had moved to Toronto, and had joined the staff of the *News*, where he was thrown into contact with Mr. E. E. Sheppard. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Sheppard founded *Saturday Night*, and Duncan McKellar became the first literary editor, dramatic critic and illustrator for the infant

periodical. And to *Saturday Night* Peter McArthur contributed "My Young Moustache" and other verses.

After the teaching interlude, Peter McArthur returned to the farm for a short time, during which he sent a poem to *Puck*. The editor, Mr. H. C. Bunner, took the trouble to write the would-be contributor a letter explaining that the poem was rejected because, it being an "election year," there was not space for it. The disappointed youth, not realizing the honour of receiving a personal letter from Mr. Bunner about his piece, felt only humiliation over his own presumption in having submitted anything to *Puck*. He took the letter to the field where he was plowing, and plowed it under to bury his shame. He has since expressed regret for his hasty action, and wished that he had kept the letter, in the memory of which he now takes some justifiable pride.

At the age of twenty-two, in September, 1888, to be exact, Peter McArthur went to Toronto, and enrolled in the Faculty of Arts at University College. His first action as an undergraduate is typical of the initiative and readiness to engage in reform movements which he has exhibited all his life. He organ-

ized, and was a leading member of, the Brute Force Committee, brought into being to check the hazing then in vogue. Their methods were simple. They met the upper years in battle, and inflicted a severe defeat upon them.

The intimacy with Duncan McKellar received fresh impetus now the young men were together again, and the two worked together to develop their talents for sketching and drawing cartoons. This faculty was to come in useful later to Peter McArthur, as it enabled him to sell cartoon ideas to *Puck, Judge* and the New York dailies. While at college he was supporting himself by contributing a page of jokes weekly to Mr. J. W. Bengough's paper, *Grip,* for which the budding humorist received $2.50. As his board and room came to that sum exactly, he was able to maintain life; but his other college expenses were so heavy that financial difficulties ended his course after five months.

On leaving the University of Toronto in February, 1889, Peter McArthur joined the staff of the Toronto *Mail*, as reporter. No car-fare was allowed in those days, and he often went his rounds with swollen feet. He still continued his regular contributions to *Grip*, and

even attempted to keep up his college studies also, but found the latter an impossibility.

Finding his jests in *Grip* being quoted in American periodicals, he began sending jokes, epigrams and verses to the New York *Sun, Puck, Chatter* and other publications. The jokes he usually offered in lots of twenty-five. As these contributions were accepted generally, he was satisfied that his facility in joke-making would always provide food; and so, in May, 1890, at the age of twenty-four, he moved to New York.

There he lived a Bohemian life, supporting himself by free lance journalism, which occupation he defines as "the art of concealing one's ignorance at space rates." He disposed of an article or two on Canadian lumbering to *Harper's Weekly*. He also wrote for *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Century*, *Ainslie's* and *The Smart Set*. He wrote articles on economics and short stories for newspaper syndicates, and humourous, "artistic" and "literary" articles, which found homes where they could. He wrote jokes and humourous verses for *Life, Puck, Judge, Truth, Town Topics* and the *Sun*. From *Life* he received $2.50 per joke, but other publications paid only 50c. and $1.00 each

for them. At this period he chummed with Duncan McKellar, who joined him in 1891, Bliss Carman, Charles G. D. Roberts, Mitchell Kennerley and Harold Hall, who later became assistant editor of *Truth*, and is now a successful New York business man. McArthur meanwhile haunted the Free Library, and continued the course of reading begun as a boy.

The year 1895, Peter McArthur being twenty-nine, was an important one for him. In March he was appointed assistant editor of *Truth*, which was the first paper printed by photo colour printing—an advertisement for the American Lithographic Company. As dramatic critic, he attended the theatre a great deal, and remembers seeing Booth frequently until the latter's death. In August he was promoted to the position of editor-in-chief and art manager. In September he married Mabel C. Waters, of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. During this year, also, he found another friend in Calvert Bowyer Vaux, who had charge of the printing department of *Truth*. He is still a close friend of Mr. Vaux, a man of fine literary taste, who is now head of the publication department of Wistar Institute, Philadelphia.

While editor of *Truth* Peter McArthur was

assisted by a brilliant staff of contributors, of whom Stephen Leacock and Duncan Campbell Scott were the most regular. Among others, whose compositions appeared under Peter McArthur's editorship, were O. Henry, Harold McGrath, Ellis Parker Butler and Bliss Carman, who, having formed a connection with *Town Topics,* was not able to contribute as frequently as Duncan Campbell Scott. The contributing artists of the same period included J. Hambidge, Orsen Lowell, Charles Howard Johnson, Duncan McKellar, Everet Shinn and Robert W. Chambers, who had not then begun to write novels.

In 1897, being thirty-one years of age, Peter McArthur went back to free lance work, contributing to a long list of syndicates and magazines. As most of this work was anonymous, it is next to impossible to trace the output of these years.

Peter McArthur next moved to London, England, at the age of thirty-six, that is, in the year 1902. There he spent two years in free lance work, contributing chiefly to the *Review of Reviews* and *Punch.* It is interesting to note that only three men from this side of the Atlantic have ever been regular contributors to

Punch, the other two being the Canadian, Judge Haliburton, and the American, Artemus Ward. McArthur also was advertising manager for W. T. Stead's *Daily Paper*.

During his two years in London, Peter McArthur wrote the clever satire, "To be Taken with Salt: An Essay On Teaching One's Grandmother to Suck Eggs." The point of this book is that the young colonial, with his New York training, had gone over to show England a thing or two—principally about advertising—and was not as successful as he had expected to be. In fact, his great schemes tumbled about his ears, and for a time he was in difficulties. The book was written on a bargain with the publisher to advance enough royalties to meet the author's life insurance premium, which was then due. This is not quite as bad as the story of Samuel Johnson writing "Rasselas" beside his mother's corpse to raise money enough to bury her, but the incident illustrates almost as forcibly the proverbial poverty of authors. As the publisher failed after twenty-five copies had been sent out for review, this work is now almost impossible to obtain.

Returning to New York in 1904, richer only

in experience, Peter McArthur became a partner in the firm of McArthur and Ryder, commercial publishers, or advertising agency as we would call it now. His work for the firm included the writing of short stories winding up in some obvious advertisement for some product. Two of these tiny booklets, containing twenty-four pages each, and measuring 2½ by 4¾ inches, are still in their author's possession; and very neat bits of work they are. The one advertising Yale locks is called "The Ghost and the Burglar"; and the other, entitled "The Peacemakers," illustrates the advantages of using the Blount Door Check. McArthur remarks ruefully that these pieces of fiction, issued anonymously and circulated free, gave him his greatest public, as they were printed and sent out by the million. But, true as ever to his instinct for independent creative work, he still continued his free lance contributions to a wide circle of periodicals.

"The Prodigal and Other Poems" was published in 1907. The intention was to give samples of the poet's efforts in different kinds of verse. Most of the selections in the little volume had appeared previously in various papers and magazines.

The most important event in Peter McArthur's life was his return to the old homestead in Ekfrid Township in the year 1908, when he was forty-two years old. From this point on his literary skill was turned to the portrayal of country life; and, after the promising career that had compelled him to live out of Canada for eighteen years, he settled contentedly on the farm, glad enough to identify himself thoroughly with his simple surroundings. In the fall of the same year he began a series of articles describing the activities on his own place; and these were published weekly in the Toronto *Globe*. Soon similar articles began to appear in *The Farmers' Advocate* (London, Ontario). Later the *Globe* articles were syndicated for a short time, but they now (1923) appear every Wednesday and Saturday exclusively in the *Globe,* in which they are one of the most popular features. This fifteen-year run of a single feature in one daily paper constitutes a record not even approached by any other Canadian journalist.

There is little to record after 1908. Peter McArthur has lived quietly and happily with his wife and children in the old home. He has had ample leisure in the interludes of his farm

work to keep up his regular journalism; to contribute a good deal of material to many magazines and newspapers, most of which was published anonymously, but some of which may be traced to the *Forum* (New York) and the *Canadian Magazine*.

Since 1908, he has brought out five books. From October, 1910, to June, 1911, he issued the seven numbers of *Ourselves*, which constitute the complete file of that publication. It was a bright little magazine, resembling in format Elbert Hubbard's famous *Philistine*. *Ourselves* contained stories, epigrams and short poems—nearly all of which came from the editor's own pen. "To be Taken With Salt" was run serially in its pages, and gave Canadians their first glimpse of the finer talents of its author.

Mr. and Mrs. McArthur have five children. The eldest, Daniel Carman McArthur, born August 12th, 1897, was overseas with the Canadian forces as a corporal in the 56th Battery, and is now farming editor of *The Farmer's Sun* (Toronto). This young man "takes after his father" not only in his leanings towards journalism of the bucolic order, but also in his skill

in drawing. While at the Ontario Agricultural College, he was the editor of the *Review;* and his sketches illustrate "Bits o' Bronze" by H. C. Mason, another O.A.C. student, and published by Thomas Allen, of Toronto. The second son, Peter McKellar McArthur, born June 28th, 1900, is living up to the tradition by completing a brilliant course at the Ontario Agricultural College, where he edits the *Review*. He has also had a poem published in *Life*. Both the older boys, however, evince a tendency towards the practical, which they have inherited, one judges, from their charming and level-headed mother, rather than from their variously gifted father. Catherine Elizabeth McArthur, born March 13th, 1903, graduated from Macdonald Hall in 1923, and spent the summer of that year (which is the current one) as playground supervisor in Hamilton, Ontario. The two younger boys, James Frederick McArthur and Ian Stewart McArthur, born respectively on August 24th, 1905, and August 11th, 1907, are likely lads, but any distinctions that have come to them as yet are, naturally, only of a parochial nature. They are still at school,

helping on the farm, playing baseball, and otherwise conducting themselves as farmers' wholesome sons should.

The farm on which the author and his family live in such harmony is reached by driving two miles south-west from Appin, or three miles north-east from Glencoe. The visitor finds that the house is set about a hundred yards back from the main road, and is partially screened from it by a row of tall oaks, the largest and farthest south of which is the one referred to in "The Boy and the Oak." The residence itself, reached by a winding driveway, called "the lane" by the McArthurs, is a rather small, white building with a low pitched gable roof. Though built of logs, as its owner has stated, it is only possible to verify the fact on the front and rear faces of the structure, since the northern and southern exposures are completely covered with ivy and Viriginia creeper. Between the house and the oaks is a pleasant bit of lawn; and sitting there in the shade of the big trees in the afternoon or evening one notices that many passers-by slow up their cars while passing the McArthur homestead. For the author's name has become so widely known during the past fifteen years that he and his

little domain are the objects of a good deal of curiosity, which he bears with quite patiently in spite of the fact that he is a shy man essentially, and strongly averse to any form of personal publicity.

At either side of the house, and in the immediate rear, are flower beds—evidences of Mrs. McArthur's taste and industry. The barn and other buildings stand at a considerable distance behind the house and a little to the north of it. Behind these again are the main grain field and the pasture, where Fenceviewer II and her more recent progeny may be encountered. The "old" orchard, which takes up so much of the reader's attention in "In Pastures Green," is to the north of the barn; and the "new" orchard is away to the south. At the extreme rear, or western end of the farm is the wood-lot, about which we have heard so much. Under these really magnificent trees Peter McArthur has a tent, which he uses as a study in summer, and to which visitors, other than the most intimate personal friends, are not invited.

Winding an irregular way across the farm, passing beside the oaks, and under the driveway, is an insignificant ditch. This, if you

please, is *the government drain!*—that mighty aqueduct, whose name we have seen in print so often that it has tended to take on, in our imaginations, something of the mystery and glamour of the Avon, the Thames or the Seine. Partly a natural watercourse, and partly artificial, it is as homely and simple and spontaneous as everything else on that fifty acres. For the log house, which is so quaint outside, is as comfortable and pleasant inside as is only possible where a skilled home-maker is in charge.

And here will be found the sane, kindly man, whose name adorns the title-page of this book. Here, surrounded by a family whose affection for him is very patent, dwells and works Peter McArthur, a maker of Canadian literature. Of medium height, stocky rather than thick-set, the author is endowed with a superabundance of health and good spirits. In dress there is nothing to distinguish him from the run of Ontario farmers, nor in bearing either, beyond, perhaps, a certain jauntiness and springiness in his walk that remains from the hustling city days of his earlier life. His head, surmounted by its dense mass of rapidly greying hair, is

large, and splendidly formed. The memory of his face in repose is no more than the mental image of a pair of steel-rimmed spectacles balanced unevenly on his nose, so that one glass was considerably higher than the other, and so adjusted that one eye peered through its glass and the other was well above the rim of the lens on that side; and an echo of his voice explaining that he didn't need spectacles to see with, except for reading, but he had to put them on whenever he wanted to think—a confession as beautifully naive as is the man himself.

But his face in animation—how expressive it is! And how eager! For now it seems that the thing which is most striking about the man personally, and which has never been mentioned in print, is that he is a great talker. He will converse vivaciously on any subject with any listener. All who know him personally relish his unceasing flow of stories, anecdotes, argument and repartee. And in these days, when conversation is beginning to be reckoned among the lost arts, it is well to leave on record that Peter McArthur has the reputation of being one of the best talkers in the country.

Some psychologist may yet be able to tell us whether his penchant for gossiping in print results from his oral facility or vice-versa.

As he talks, every muscle of his face provides a running commentary on his words. His expressions indicate light-hearted fun, shrewdness, sadness occasionally, but, predominantly, different degrees of eagerness, and—a note of wistfulness. Yes, that is it. There is something boyish in his enthusiasms, childlike in his questioning. May it always be so! for has he not himself written:

> "And now I know life has no greater joy
> Than, having lived, to be once more a boy."

ANTHOLOGY

EARTHBORN

Hurled back, defeated, like a child I sought
The loving shelter of my native fields,
Where Fancy still her magic sceptre wields,
And still the miracles of youth are wrought.
'Twas here that first my eager spirit caught
The rapture that relentless conflict yields,
And, scorning peace and the content that
shields,
Took life's wild way, unguarded and untaught.
Dear Mother Nature, not in vain we ask
Of thee for strength! The visioned victories
Revive my heart, and golden honours gleam:
For here, once more, while in thy love I bask,
My soul puts forth her rapid argosies
To the uncharted ports of summer dream.

ASPIRATION

How should I be the master of my ways
When every nerve is vibrant to the sweep
Of dreams that fill the measure of my days—
Too rare to lose and past all power to keep.

How should I know what it were well to do
When every path has its alluring strain,
Each towering crest its world-revealing view
Of realms for him that has the will to reign;
And while I waver, lo! this earthly shard,
Wherein is breathed the swift compelling fire
Breaks with the ardour it was shaped to guard.
Yet, ever striving, humbly I aspire
Ere all be spent, with reverent hands to light
A guiding star on some hope-kindling height.

LIFE

Dear God, I thank Thee for this resting place,
This fleshly temple where my soul may dwell
And, like an anchorite within his cell,
Learn all Thy love and grow to perfect grace.
Yet, while the veil still hides me from Thy face,
Give me the light to know that all is well,
With guiding truth my erring fears dispel,
Be Thou the rock on which my faith I base.
Thy guest, not captive, to my visioned goal
I soar beyond the memory of strife,
Upborn and shielded by Thy power benign:
Thou art the strength of my unfaltering soul,
And from the vantage of this mortal life
The freedom of the infinite is mine.

THE PRODIGAL

Last night the boy came back to me again,
The laughing boy, all-credulous of good—
Long lost, far-wandered in the ways of men,
He came and roused me with an olden mood.
He came, the lover and enthusist,
Shook off my years, and with enlightened eyes
Smiled at the shadow that the world had cast,
And looked at life with all the old surprise;
And I, the slave of patience, took him in,
Gave him my heart and bade him welcome home,
Thrilled with his dreams of all I yet may win—
Allured again in golden paths to roam,
And now I know life has no greater joy
Than, having lived, to be once more a boy.

THE OCEAN LINER

Like some bewildered monster of the deep,
Groping to freedom through the baffling tide,
She blunders forth, while nuzzling at her side
The bustling harbour craft about her creep.
Anon she feels her iron pulses leap,
And, symbol of the age's mastering pride,
Looks out to where the ocean stretches wide,
Scorning the fears that in its mystery sleep.

All day with headlong and undoubting haste,
  And all the night, upon her path she flames
    Like some weird shape from olden errantry;
And when some wafted wanderer of the waste
  A storm-worn pennant dips afar, proclaims
    With raucous voice her strong supremacy.

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

When the maples flame with crimson
  And the nights are still with frost,
Ere the summer's luring beauty
  Is in autumn glory lost,
Through the marshes and the forests
  An imperious summons flies,
And from all the dreaming North-land
  The wild birds flock and rise.

From streams no oar hath rippled
  And lakes that waft no sail,
From reaches vast and lonely
  That know no hunter's trail,
The clamour of their calling
  And the whistling of their flight
Fill all the day with marvel,
  And with mystery, the night.

As ebb along the ocean
  The great obedient tides,
So wave on wave they journey
  Where an ancient wisdom guides;
A-through the haze of autumn
  They vanish down the wind,
With the summer world before them
  And the crowding storms behind.

AN INDIAN WIND SONG

The wolf of the winter wind is swift,
  And hearts are still and cheeks are pale,
When we hear his howl in the ghostly drift,
  As he rushes past on a phantom trail;
And all the night we huddle and fear,
  For we know that his path is the path of Death,
And the flames burn low, when his steps are near,
  And the dim hut reeks with his grave-cold breath.

The fawn of the wind of the spring is shy,
  Her light feet rustle the sere, white grass,
The trees are roused as she races by,
  In the pattering rain we hear her pass;

And the bow unstrung we cast aside,
While we winnow the golden, hoarded maize,
And the earth awakes with a thrill of pride
To deck her beauty for festal days.

The hawk of the summer wind is proud,
She circles high at the throne of the sun;
When the storm is fierce her scream is loud,
And the scorching glance of her eye we shun;
And oftentimes, when the sun is bright,
A silence falls on the choirs of song,
And the partridge shrinks in a wild affright,
Where a searching shadow swings along.

The hound of the autumn wind is slow,
He loves to bask in the heat and sleep,
When the sun through the drowsy haze bends low,
And frosts from the hills through the starlight creep;
But oftentimes he starts in his dreams,
When the howl of the winter wolf draws nigh,
Then lazily rolls in the gold-warm beams,
While the flocking birds to the south drift by.

SUGAR WEATHER

When snowballs pack on the horses' hoofs
  And the wind from the south blows warm,
When the cattle stand where the sunbeams beat
  And the noon has a dreamy charm,
When icicles crash from the dripping eaves
  And the furrows peep black through the snow,
Then I hurry away to the sugar bush,
  For the sap will run, I know.

With auger and axe and spile and trough
  To each tree a visit I pay,
And every boy in the countryside
  Is eager to help to-day.
We roll the backlogs into their place,
  And the kettles between them swing,
Then gather the wood for the roaring fire
  And the sap in pailfuls bring.

A fig for your arches and modern ways,
  A fig for your sheet-iron pan,
I like the smoky old kettles best
  And I stick to the good old plan;
We're going to make sugar and taffy to-night
  On the swing pole under the tree,
And the girls and the boys for miles around
  Are all sworn friends to me.

PETER McARTHUR

CORN-PLANTING

The earth is awake and the birds have come,
  There is life in the beat of the breeze,
And the basswood tops are alive with the hum
  And the flash of the hungry bees;
The frogs in the swale in concert croak,
  And the glow of the spring is here,
For the bursting leaves on the rough old oak
  Are as big as a red squirrel's ear.

From the ridge-pole dry the corn we pluck,
  Ears ripe and yellow and sound,
That were saved apart, with a red for luck,
  The best that the huskers found;
We will shell them now, for the Indian folk
  Say, "Plant your corn without fear
When the bursting leaves on the rough old oak
  Are as big as a red squirrel's ear."

No crow will pull and no frost will blight,
  Nor grub cut the tender sprout,
No rust will burn and no leaves turn white,
  But the stalks will be tall and stout;
And never a weed will have power to choke,
  Or blasting wind to sear,
The corn that we plant when the leaves of the oak
  Are as big as a red squirrel's ear.

THE END OF THE DROUGHT

Last night we marked the twinkling stars,
  This morn no dew revived the grass,
And oft across the parching fields
  We see the dusty eddies pass;
The eager hawk forgets to swing
  And scream across the burning sky,
And from the oak's slow-dying crest
  Sends forth a strange and plaintive cry.

The geese on unaccustomed wings
  Flap wildly in ungainly flight,
The peacock's fierce, defiant scream
  Scatters the fowls in wild affright,
The crows are barking in the woods,
  The maple leaves their silver show,
The cattle sniff the coming storm,
  Then toss their heads and softly low.

And now along the hazy west
  The swiftly building clouds uprear;
High overhead the winds are loud,
  The thunder rolls and grumbles near;
The housewife trims the leaky eaves,
  The farmer frets of lodging grain,
Till all the world, rejoicing, drinks
  The long-denied, long-prayed-for rain.

PETER McARTHUR

AN ODE OF EMPIRE

I

Under a night of dim and alien stars,
With homeless heart and angry tears I cried:
"Is this the land of immemorial pride?
Of sainted chivalry and heroic wars?
Of happy vales and glooms of witchery?
My far-born boyhood's land of dream and song?
Of manhood's faith and sternest loyalty,
Britannia the just and strong?
O heart defrauded, what is here to cherish?
And what to hope amid this wide disgrace
Where hunger stalks and where the faithful perish,
While sullen sluggards crowd the market-place?
Britannia's sons across the seas are calling,
Joyous and strong from many a fruitful plain;
On heedless ears their love and cheer are falling,
Their birthright bartered for a cold disdain.
But they of British sires were born,
And they shall answer scorn for scorn:
Nor long shall fools their youth deride,
Sons of the proud are born to pride."

II

"Oh, for an hour of the ampler stainless spaces
That breathe the health of nations, where the sun
Spreads his wide tent upon the hallowed places
That toil's long battle from the waste has won.
Give me my birthland, still unknown to story,
Dearer than dream remembered from afar,
Where love and plenty yield a golden glory,
That shames the cruel barren pomp of war.
And O ye spirits of that world unsung,
That serve the god of solitude, once more
Send me the vision though with faltering tongue
I voice your music on a friendless shore.
Strike your wide harp and to Æolian numbers
Marshall the legions of the patient dead
From noteless fields whereon their lives were sped,
Where harvest winds and bird song lull their slumbers;
Call them again that men may see
Heroes of bloodless victory;
May see and learn to love and bless
The silent vanguard of the wilderness."

III

A rousing wind among the wintry trees
  Made ancient murmuring and the huddling
    night
Thrilled with the fear of whispered mysteries;
  When lo, around me fell the olden light
And rank on rank I saw them marching by,
  With cloudless brow and dreadless eye,
The heroes of my eager youth,
  Druid and saint and kings of chivalry;
  Fierce plunderers of the unchartered sea,
Unknown alike to fear and ruth:
Warriors and minstrels and the lords of truth,
  All memory's roster of idolatry.
And not from guarded graves they came,
  But from the lands where honour leads,
Where still they serve and by their fame
  Urge humble hearts to mighty deeds,
  And through that vision at their side
  My brothers marched with fearless stride
  And voiced with that heroic throng
  The choral music of prophetic song.

IV

Fool, to be wroth with but a noteless day,
  To heed its spawn or have their scorn in mind,
The dead are all imperial and their sway
  Not islanded and to no shore confined.

Once more my soul puts out to ports of daring
With all the lordly comrades of my choice.
The soaring wind is master of our faring,
The sea's wide freedom bids our hearts rejoice.
Far as the day-span our adventure urges
A dateless voyage through the reach of time,
The past goes down behind oblivious surges,
The future rises with a dawn sublime.
Fronting the world with calm and level vision,
New sons of empire, heirs to all its pride,
Smile back in answer to a dull derision,
Serving and building where their fathers died.
Theirs is the strength and not the boastful seeming,
Theirs is the deed and not the foolish dreaming,
Theirs is the harvest of life's proudest pages,
And theirs the empire that shall awe the ages.

London, England, 1904.

THE STONE

A man! A man! There is a man loose in Canada!
A man of heroic mould, a "throwback" of earlier ages,
Vigourous, public-spirited, not afraid of work!
A doer of deeds, not a dreamer and babbler;
A man, simple, direct, unaffected.
Such a one as Walt Whitman would have gloried in,
And made immortal in rugged man-poetry—
Vast polyphlœsbœan verses such as erstwhile he bellowed
Through roaring storm winds to the bull-mouthed Atlantic.

And yesterday the man passed among us unnoted!
Did his deed and went his way without boasting,
Leaving his act to speak, himself silent!

And I, beholding the marvel, stood for a space astonied,
Then threw up my hat and chortled,
And whooped in dithyrambic exultation.
Hark to my tale!

On the sixteenth sideroad of the township of Ekfrid,
Just south of the second concession line, some rods from the corner,
There was a stone, a stone in the road, a stumbling-block;
A jagged tooth of granite dropped from the jaw of a glacier
In an earlier age when the summers were colder;
A rock that horses tripped on, wheels bumped on, and sleigh-runners scrunched on,
And no man in all the land had the gumption to dig it out.
Pathmaster after pathmaster, full of his pride of office,
Rode by with haughty brow, and regarded it not,
Seeing only the weeds in the field of the amateur farmer,
And scrawling minatory letters or ordering them cut,
But leaving the stone.
Oft in my hot youth I, riding in a lumber waggon,
By that lurking stone was catapulted skyward,
And picked myself up raging and vowing to dig it out—
But dug it not. I didn't have a spade,

Or, if I had a spade, I had a lame back—always
an excuse.
And the stone stayed.
As passed the years—good years, bad years,
Years that were wet or dry, lean years and fat
years,
Roaring election years (mouthing reforms); in
short, all years
That oldest inhabitants keep in stock—there
grew a tradition
About the stone. Men, it was said, had tried
to move it,
But it was a stubborn boulder, deep sunk in
the earth,
And could only be moved by dynamite—at vast
cost to the council;
But every councillor was a watchdog of the
treasury,
And the stone stayed.
Since the memory of man runneth the stone
was there.
It had stubbed the toe of the Algonquin brave,
and haply
Had tripped the ferocious, marauding Iroquois.
It had jolted the slow, wobbling ox-cart of the
pioneer;

Jolted the lumber waggons, democrats, buggies, sulkies;
Jolted the pungs, crotches, stoneboats, bobsleighs, cutters;
Upset loads of bolts, staves, cordwood, loads of logs and hay;
Jolted threshing machines, traction engines, automobiles,
Milk waggons with cans of whey, envied of querulous swine;
It had shattered the dreams of farmers, figuring on crops;
Of drovers planning sharp deals;
Of peddlers, agents, doctors, preachers;
It had jolted lovers into closer embraces, to their bashful delight;
But mostly it had shaken men into sinful tempers—
A wicked stone, a disturbing stone, a stumbling-block—
A stone in the middle of the road—
Insolent as a bank, obstructive as a merger!

Year after year the road flowed around it,
Now to the right side, now to the left;
But always on dark nights flowing straight over it,

Jolting the belated traveller into a passion black as midnight,
Making his rocking vocabulary slop over
With all the shorter and uglier words.
Boys grew to manhood and men grew to dotage.
And year after year they did statute-labour
By cutting the thistles and golden-rod, milk-weeds and burdocks,
But left the stone untouched.

There is a merry tale that I heard in my childhood,
Standing between my father's knees, before the open fireplace,
Watching the sparks make soldiers on the blazing backlog,
While the shadows danced on the low-beamed ceiling;
A pretty tale, such as children love, and it comes to me now;
Comes with the sharp, crisp smell of wood smoke,
The crackle of flaming cordwood on the dockers,
The dancing shadows and the hand on my tousled head—
A clear memory, a dear memory, and ever the stone

As it lay in my path in the roadway brought back the story—
The loving voice, and, at the close, the laughter.

"Once upon a time there was a king, a mighty ruler,
Deep in the lore of human hearts, wise as a serpent,
Who placed a stone in the road in the midst of his kingdom,
On the way to his palace, where all men must pass it.
Straightway the people turned aside, turning to right and to left of it.
Statesmen, scholars, courtiers, noblemen, merchants,
Beggars, labourers, farmers, soldiers, generals, men of all classes
Passed the stone, and none tried to move it—
To clear the path of the travelling multitude.
But one day came a man, a kindly poor man,
Who thought it a shame that the stone should be there,
A stumbling-block to the nation. Bowing his back
He put his shoulder to it, and behold, a marvel!
The stone was but a shell, hollow as a bowl!

A child might have moved it.
And in the hollow was a purse of gold, and with it a writing:
'Let him who hath the public spirit to move the stone
Keep the purse and buy a courtly robe,
And come to the palace to serve the king as prime minister.'
So the kindly poor man who had public spirit
Became the chief ruler of all the nation.
When the news was told to them, all men rushed to the highways
And moved away the stones, but found no purse of gold;
But they cleared the roads of stones, and the 'Good Roads Movement'
Went through without cost because the king was wise
And well understood our weak human nature."

Ever when passing the stone I remembered this story
And smiled, touched by memories of childhood,
But knew there was no purse under it; there might be an angle-worm,
But I was not going fishing—and the stone stayed.

Now mark the sequel, the conclusion of the matter!
Yesterday a man went by—whether neighbour or stranger,
No man can tell me, though I have questioned widely,
Questioned eagerly, longing to do him honour,
To chant his name in song, or cunningly engrave it
In monumental brass, with dædal phantasies—
To make it a landmark, a beacon to all future ages,
This good man, earnest, public-spirited,
Not fearing work, scorning tradition,
Doing his duty as he saw it, not waiting an order,
Dug out the stone and made it a matter of laughter,
For it was no boulder, deep-rooted, needing dynamite,
But just a little stone about the size of a milk-pail.
A child might have moved it, and yet it had bumped us
For three generations because we lacked public spirit.
I blush with shame as I pass the stone now lying

In the roadside ditch where the good man
rolled it,
And left it where all men may see it—a symbol,
a portent.

Tremble, ye Oppressors! Quake, ye Financial
Pirates!
Your day is at hand, for there is a man loose
in Canada!
A man to break through your illegal labyrinths,
A Theseus to cope with your corporate Mino-
taurs,
A Hercules to clean out your Augean stables
of grafters,
A man who moves stones from the path of his
fellows!
And makes smooth the way of the Worker!
And such a man may move you! Tremble, I
say!

BACK TO THE LAND *

This morning, while thinking about one of the serious problems now pressing for solution, I was moved to take stock of my business as a farmer, and the result surprised me. Feeling that what I found may have some bearing on the solution of the problem I had in mind, I am going to set forth some personal matters, in the hope that they may be helpful to others.

Five years ago I landed on this farm with no assets but a love of nature, a sense of humour, and a deep-rooted conviction that because I had been born and brought up on a farm I could make a living for myself and family from the land. When I took stock to-day I found that I have on hand enough produce to keep man and beast in perfect comfort for at least a year —until another harvest—and that is not a small matter at a time when our world is in ruins. When you understand my purpose you will absolve me from any suspicion of boasting when I tell you what I have on the farm. I have four milch cows, two heifers, a steer that is fattening for winter beef, and three calves; over twenty tons of hay; stacks of mixed oats

* Preface to "In Pastures Green."

and barley that if threshed, would probably yield from two to three hundred bushels; a field of corn that will probably yield five hundred bushels; a well-loaded orchard and a plentiful supply of home-preserved fruit; a good patch of potatoes, and a garden with a winter's supply of such staple vegetables as celery, tomatoes, cabbage, beets, carrots, and onions. I also have an interest in a flock of poultry that insures a plentiful supply of fresh eggs at all times, as well as fat hens for the pot, and just now plump broilers are practising crowing all over the place. I also have ducks, turkeys, and guinea-fowl to provide for feast days that may be allowed to come oftener than they ever came in the city. The expenditure of less than fifty dollars would provide us with supplies of flour, sugar, tea, salt, and other necessaries that would enable us to live in comfort for a year, even if we were entirely cut off from the rest of the world.

Just what the farm has meant to me in the past five years I cannot tell, for things did not work out as I had planned. Instead of applying myself wholly to farming, like Zangwill, "I returned to my inky vomit," and depended on my pen for a living. While doing this I farmed

in "a rambling, desultory way," and had more fun with my farming operations than an active pup ever had with an old shoe. I did what I liked, and did it as I liked. At no time did I attempt to farm for profit. Everything was raised for our own use, and if there was a surplus of anything it was sold. No attempt was made to run a model farm—I was simply a poor farmer of the kind that make a bare living from the land. While doing this I kept up a constant roar about my farm work. I issued more bulletins than the Department of Agriculture, and I am afraid they were more widely read. This was good business from the point of view of a writer, but I am afraid that some who missed the burlesquing tone of many articles got obsessed with the idea that I was trying to farm scientifically and to show how farming should be done. Real farmers, according to their various natures, viewed my work with pity, contempt, ridicule, loathing, malevolence, mendacity, loquacity, jackassity, and every other capacity that people develop. Lecturers for the farmers' institutes made it a point to call on me when they were in the neighbourhood, and after the first shock was over proceeded to gather specimens of noxious

weeds that they found it hard to get elsewhere. Government scientists came out of their way to see me, and gazed with awe at the neglected farm from which I raised such a crop—of newspaper articles. Then they took out their cyanide bottles and began to collect rare specimens of bugs and pests, for I had all of them. Touring automobilists stopped to make a call, and when they went away I could hear them laughing as far off as the second culvert on the concession line. Nevertheless and notwithstanding, I never described any farm work that I did not do and no incident was recorded that did not happen. If you have a false idea of my farming it is your own fault. At all times I told the truth, merely garnishing it with humour, poetry, and philosophy. And to-day the result of my farm work is the most satisfactory asset I have. In the days of the patriarchs a man with more than a year's supply of provisions would be regarded as a plutocrat. In the awakening that has been caused by the war I shall be surprised if there are not many people in our cities who will think that the patriarchal view was right.

During the years that I have been writing from the country I have received many hun-

dreds, possibly thousands, of letters, and I was glad that not one of them was from some one who had been induced by me to leave the city and try farming. To-day I feel differently about the matter. My experience has shown me that although attempts to farm for profit would result in failure for most city people, it is quite possible for a city man to farm for a living. Without any definite purpose to that end I find myself with a year's living in hand, and know that, with good health, I can accomplish that much year after year. At this time, with the business of the world more completely disorganized than most people imagine, I do not hesitate to advise every one who can possibly go back to the land to go. If I had my way there would not be a vacant farmhouse in all Canada before the snow flies. Men who are out of work and have some resources would find it cheaper to spend the idle winter on a farm, and they could be ready by spring to begin to make their living from the soil. At the present time our cities have many victims of the war who are as blameless as the victims of a great fire or any similar disaster. They must be cared for, and our government would be making no mistake in voting

an appropriation for the purchase of a million bags of flour for the relief of distress at home. It will be many years before the business of the world can be resumed in the volume of past years, and those who are in authority can do nothing better than get the unemployed back on the land, where they can earn their own food, clothing and shelter. This suggests that the land problem will soon be one of the most pressing in Canada. How are people to get back on the land? My friends of the Single Tax Association need not write to me to explain how this is to be accomplished. I admit all their conclusions, though as a weak human being I resent the perfection of their logic. Nothing in my experience has ever happened logically. If they will stop antagonizing people with their perfect theory they may see their dreams fulfilled much sooner than they expect. The nationalization of land is immeasurably nearer than any one supposes, and it will be brought about by the blundering logic of events. The people must get back on the land, must! must! must! The work of education undertaken by Henry George and his disciples is now practically complete. The time has come for action. People must have access to the land—to the

one source of production. If the people of the cities turn towards the land, where they can provide for themselves, it will not be long before as much justice as is humanly possible will be accorded to them. Land-hunger will force a solution of the land problem. The time for dissertations on abstract justice is past. It is to stimulate the land-hunger that I have made bold to trouble readers of this column with so frank a statement of my personal affairs at the present time. If you are looking ahead with terror to the long winter, you should make up your mind that before another winter comes you will be as well provided for as I am, with the fruits of your own labour on the land. "Back to the land" should become a slogan of power. I trust that those who are in authority, and who will have the task of caring for our victims of the war, will give it their earnest attention.

THE HOME IDEAL

At the present time the farmers are the sole inheritors of the ideals of our fathers. But like the foolish men of the cities they are also organizing for profit. They have forgotten that

the home was the one great ideal of the men and women who braved the perils of the ocean and conquered the wilderness. Farming is above all a home-building occupation—rather than a money-making business. But now men no longer regard the place where they live as a home. It is merely a speculation in real estate. They try to estimate everything in terms of dollars—and the money profits are so meagre that all who are able are deserting the farms and joining in the great jazz-time dollar dance of the cities. The farmers are forsaking the substance for the glitter—or are organizing for political power so that they may divert the stream of dollars towards the farms. Of course it can be shown that under modern conditions there can be no home without money. But why trouble about modern conditions? The world is very old and has developed many great men and all that we know of good without the aid of modern conditions. Few of the poets and prophets and great leaders of the past were born in the cities. "Modern conditions"—luxury, extravagance, dissipation, and parasitism—undoubtedly encompassed the destruction of all the great cities whose names move sonorously in verse. And now the farmers

are lusting for the "modern conditions" that are hurrying the cities to destruction.

THE EVIL OF ORGANIZATIONS

The curse of the present time is organization. Our civilization has woven about itself a web of organizations that will destroy it as certainly as the poisoned shirt of Nessus destroyed Hercules. It is organization that makes Business Success possible, and it is under the exactions of Business Success that the whole world is writhing. Much, if not all, of the present-day unrest can be traced back to organized greed —either to the greed of capitalists or the greed of classes. By organizing they get power, and when they get power they abuse it to gratify their own selfishness. The trouble is not due to the principles of organization, but to the fact that we have allowed organization to degenerate into conspiracy. And conspiracy would not be possible without secrecy. If every organization formed under the protection of that one big organization, the Government, of which we are all a part, were subjected to a publicity as pitiless as the Day of Judgment, we would have no cases of three hundred and ten per

cent. and over. And I can see no sound reason why the workings of business and the operations of capital generally should not be subject to the closest possible scrutiny. The Government is forced to do business in public, under the constant criticism of a hostile Opposition, and yet it manages to get along. Even kings and presidents live in the white light that beats upon a throne, and every act that affects the welfare of citizens is open to examination. But the Kings of Industry and all the operations of Big Business must be shrouded in darkness and mystery. Nonsense! Honest business can bear the light of day just as well as honest government. Our Captains of Industry all claim to be serving the public. That is the excuse for the privileges they demand. Then why not let us see how they are serving it? Is it that they are too modest? I am afraid their modesty is much like that of Artemus Ward's noble Red Man who stole a blanket and a bottle of whiskey and then rushed whooping to the wilderness to conceal his emotion. Our Kings of Big Business are very anxious to conceal their emotion—and other things. It is true that they do a great service in building up our countries; but the difficulty is that they

want the title to all the buildings in their own names.

Organizations, no doubt, have their value, but when overdone their effect is more than questionable. At the present time individual initiative, which is probably the greatest force for good in our civilization, is being benumbed and stifled by the mad passion for organization. In the matter of food production we constantly get news about this and that great organization that is arranging to investigate and take action, and the ordinary man gets an entirely wrong idea into his head. He thinks that with all the Government committees and commissions and public-spirited organizations at work, it is entirely needless for him to undertake the little he might be able to do by his own efforts. This is a serious misconception; many great movements are started that are "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." While organized effort, properly directed, will undoubtedly accomplish great things, individual initiative has been the foundation of practically every success our country has known. This tendency to flock together into organizations whenever there is anything to be done is not an entirely healthful sign.

A WORLD FOR SALE

Although I did not keep account of the matter, I have no hesitation in saying that in my travelling I have met more dealers in real estate than of any other class of men. One sat with me in the train between Hamilton and Toronto and dwelt on the advantages of real estate investments in the Mountain City. Even foreign labourers who are unable to speak English are making thousands in real estate. In the observation car, travelling from Montreal to Boston, one of my fellow-passengers was an international real-estate agent. He had opened subdivisions in Seattle, Winnipeg, London, Montreal and Brooklyn. He was one of the most optimistic men I have ever met. He could see possibilities even in the swamps that we passed and in the rocky slopes of New Hampshire and Vermont that were revealed through the car windows. I suspect that he would not hesitate to open a subdivision on the planet Mars, with a frontage on the leading canal, if he could get an astronomer to furnish him with a map and blue-prints. If he should decide to do this he would have no trouble selling corner lots, for the country is full of men and women who buy real estate on maps.

In New York I found friends debating whether to sell the homes they had established, by thrift and industry, so that they could take advantage of boom prices.

In Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and Winnipeg it had been the same. Not only city properties, but farm lands were for sale everywhere. The friends I visited were all dealing in real estate on the side—no matter what their professions might be.

So it was wherever I went. So it was at home in the country. Real estate is being traded in everywhere.

A few months ago a writer in the *Toronto Globe* stated that Western Ontario is for sale. About the same time a writer in the *Saturday Evening Post* showed that the American corn belt is all for sale. People everywhere are ready to sell at a profit and move on.

The result of all this was to fix in my mind the conviction that the world is for sale.

One morning I awoke—or was I awake?—and found the world marvellously astir. A huge red flag hung down from the zenith and a jovial auctioneer with the moon for an auction block was about to offer the world for sale. Satan had foreclosed his mortgage, and Chaos,

"The Anarch Old," was looking over the property as a prospective buyer. The Soul of Man, troubled and confused, was also in the market of the world, and wondering if the only price he could offer—a list of irksome virtues—could possibly outweigh the alluring, shadowy, jazz-time pleasures that his opponent would flash before the nations.

Bringing down his gavel with a crash that arrested the attention of the universe, the auctioneer began his harangue.

"Look it over, gentlemen, look it over! Here is the greatest bargain ever offered for sale—a perfect prize package of a planet. It has been in existence a long time and all its possibilities are known. It is a perfect location for either a heaven or a hell, and has all the natural resources needed to make it one or the other. Its history shows the attempts that have been made in both directions. Let me recount them briefly. First, O Chaos, let me address myself to you.

"This world has just had a fiercer war than any one thought it was possible for man to wage. Millions have been slaughtered, millions have been wounded and crippled, millions have been starved to death, millions have been

wasted by disease. The wonderful baying of the hell-hounds of war has been stilled, but a word would unleash the pack and they would harry man through air and earth and sea. Famine and Pestilence are feeding fat on the nations, and Lust, Greed, and Hate are revelling in all the capitals. To any one wanting to start a private hell for his own amusement this is the greatest bargain ever offered. The work of building is almost complete. All that is needed is a little imagination and a consignment of sulphur. It is not even necessary to provide a match. The world is full of fools, both high and low, who are only waiting for a chance to apply the match. Take my word for it, O Chaos, you will never again have such a chance to start a summer resort of your own, so consider well the price you that are willing to pay."

Turning to the Soul of Man, who had been reduced almost to despair by this horrid recital, the face of the auctioneer glowed like the sun, and with a voice as musical as summer winds in the elms he whispered:

"O Soul of Man, why art thou troubled? My words were but words of scorn and reproof. Behold now this world with the eyes of faith.

Look at the fertile fields, flooded with sunshine —the rain-bearing clouds and the mystery of growth. Mark the little homes that dot the plains and cling to the wooded hills. Hear the laughter of children and the song of birds. Even the war was rich with deeds of heroic sacrifice. Charity, Mercy, and Science are striving to overtake Famine and Pestilence. Brotherhood waits for leadership. Truly there is here the matter for a new earth that will be a new heaven. Consider well the price that you are willing to pay."

Lifting up his voice till the universe rang with it, the auctioneer shouted:

"The sale is now on! What am I bid for this pendulous planet that swings for ever from the throne of the sun? There is no reserve bid. The sale must be concluded to-day. What am I bid?"

"Wealth!" shouted Chaos. "Gold, silver, paper, unlimited credit!"

The nations roared applause.

"Contentment," offered the Soul of Man quietly.

The nations jeered.

Then the two bidders made alternate offers. Chaos began:

"Palaces!"
"Homes."
"Power!"
"Brotherhood."
"Idleness!"
"Industry."
"Extravagance!"
"Thrift."
"License!"
"Order."

While the bidding proceeded, tumult broke out among the nations. Some favoured one bidder; some the other. As the tumult grew, the War God, who always walks before Chaos, tossed his plumed helmet and marshalled all his enginery. Once more his sword was to reap its harvest.

The great auctioneer brought down his gavel.

"Sold to the Soul of Man, for a price that he can well afford to pay!"

Then I was awake, indeed, and as I looked about me I saw the fields flooded with sunshine, felt the caress of the summer breeze, and heard the song of the birds. The children were shouting at their play—and the home was my home.

My brothers, we have a good bargain!

JUSTICE

There is one great lesson, above all others, that has been taught by this war and that few have learned. Surely we should be able to see by now the futility of human justice. If those who have been affected by this war could live for ever and the best human judgment could be exercised throughout eternity, we could not render justice to those who sinned or to those who suffered. The healing of the world does not wait on justice.

Since the dawn of history men have been striving for that form of vengeance they call justice. And the most pathetic aspect of the present crisis is that we are harking back to the primitive and demanding justice on a scale never attempted before. We would even weigh nations in the scales of justice, though we have no adequate balance and no counterpoise.

Of course it would never do to ask an indignant and outraged world to forgive a Germany that has tried to destroy the hope of man. Very well. It does not matter whether you forgive or whether you punish. Though you forgive her, she will not be forgiven. Forgiveness will

not save her from the disaster she has brought on herself no less than on others. And you cannot punish her without danger of further disasters. The whole matter—the Kaiser as well as the nations—has passed out of our hands, to be dealt with by the awful compensations of higher laws than those that man can administer. And as for us—for all of us—we must face the future as individuals rather than as nations.

The solution of the world's problems does not lie within the sphere of governments, and can neither be aided nor hindered by laws or covenants that statesmen and rulers can devise.

No man and no nation need lay claim to spiritual insight while clamouring for justice. The dispensation under which we are supposed to live is the dispensation of forgiveness and helpfulness. We profess the Golden Rule and yet demand an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Could anything be more pathetically absurd? If the world were not so wounded and stricken one might be moved to inextinguishable laughter by the pompous inanities of men who would administer God's justice in a world that has been brought to its present pitiful state by organized greed. The over-

organization of humanity for profit made the Great Catastrophe inevitable and our cure for it is more and greater organizations. But "God is not mocked." When man established democracy it was implied that every citizen would prove capable of self-government, would do his full share of the work of the world. And now the safety of democracy depends, not on governments or on leagues of government, but on the willingness and ability of each citizen to do his part.

LOYALTY

Loyalty without intelligence may degrade a man to the level of a beast.

In a democracy dog-loyalty is perhaps the greatest enemy of progress and good government. Consequently it is very necessary for us to examine all loyalty cries and loyalty propaganda with great care. We should see to it that the loyalty demanded is of a kind that a self-respecting man may cherish, and not a dog loyalty that will make him a tool of noisy and selfish leaders. Loyalty is the most generous of human emotions—the basic virtue of the Christian, the lover, the friend, the patriot. But

just because the loyal-hearted man is so generous and unselfish he is constantly being preyed upon by the designing and the selfish. Loyalty is a force that builds nations but it can also hurry them to destruction.

British statesmen have discovered, or have had it forced on their attention, that the ties of mutual trust are stronger than the centralized power of the old empires. They have found that the handclasp is stronger than the handcuff. The bonds of faith and friendship bind the empire together more securely than any bonds ever devised by Imperial power.

COW TROUBLES

The more I work among cows and study their ways the more puzzling they become to me. Sometimes when I am feeling a bit conceited, I think I understand them pretty well, and then something happens that puts me entirely out of countenance. One warm day last week, when I had let them out to water, I thought I would let them stand out and sun themselves for a while before driving them back to their stalls. I half remembered that the gate to the young orchard had been opened when

the snow was deep and left opened, but I did not give it a thought. The government drain had been flooded and was covered with slippery ice that I was sure they could not cross, and I felt that everything was serene for a pleasant sun-bath for the cows. Half an hour later I took a look to see where they were and every last one of them was in the young orchard picking at some long grass that had been brought into sight by the thaw. There was no waiting about starting to get them out, for you know the way cows have of rubbing their necks against young trees and breaking off limbs. Luckily they had not started rubbing and had done no damage, but I had to do some rushing around before I finally got them out of the orchard. But when I got them back to the icy government drain there was all kinds of trouble. You never saw such a timid bunch of cows in your life. It was absurd to think that they could walk on ice like that, and what was more they wouldn't do it. But I knew that they couldn't fly and that they had crossed that ice on the way to the orchard, and I was just as stubborn as they were. Gritting my teeth with determination I went at those cows and in a few minutes each one of them had been per-

sonally conducted across the ice by an earnest man who was earnestly twisting her tail. I then made the discovery that twisting a cow's tail puts a lot of ginger in her, for when the last one was across they began to romp around the field. I saw that I would have trouble getting them into the stable and went to the house to get some one to help. I don't think I was in the house five minutes, but when I went out again with reinforcements, those wretched cows were on the other side of the government drain again and heading towards the orchard gate. Apparently it was no trouble at all for them to cross the ice when on the way to mischief. I may say that on the return trip they did not wait for much tail twisting. Possibly the second twist hurts more than the first. Anyway they hustled back and didn't stop to argue with me.

BEATRICE

The big sow that has been added to the farm live stock is making herself quite at home. She doesn't expect us to make company of her. She is willing to help herself and seems to feel hurt when we insist on superintending her helpings. The children have named her

Beatrice, though I can't figure out just why. Beatrice suggests to me something slim and gracile rather than two hundred pounds of humpbacked and enterprising pork. They couldn't have picked up the name from anything they have heard me calling her since her arrival on the farm. I have called her many names, but I am quite sure that none of them sounded anything like Beatrice.

As Beatrice is not being fed up for pork but just being given a ration calculated to keep her in good health, she has a wide margin of unappeased appetite. Whenever she hears any one stirring she is up and about at once, and to cross the barnyard with a pail of anything is quite a feat. Occasionaly I take a pail of swill to the granary to add a few handfuls of chop-feed before giving it to Beatrice, and I find the experience rather exciting. She makes a squealing rush at me as soon as I open the gate and tries to get her nose into the pail. I kick her out of my way and then cross the yard to the granary door, kicking back like a horse at every few steps. I have heard at different times about educated pigs, but I seriously doubt if any trainer has been able to

teach a pig table manners. You can teach a dog or a cat or a horse to beg for a dainty morsel, but I don't believe any one could teach a pig to wait when food is in sight. Beatrice wants what she wants when she wants it, and she doesn't care who hears her asking for it.

"Woof! woof! woof!"

Translated and properly censored, this means that Beatrice presents her compliments to the Food Board and announces the arrival of nine little hungry bacon producers.

"Woof! woof! woof!"

She also announces that she is food controller for her family and doesn't care a "woof" for regulations that are made at Ottawa. She recognizes only the law of supply and demand, and if she doesn't get her full rations of swill, bran and similar necessities she is not afraid to express her opinions of everything and everybody, including the censorship. She now has to do the eating for ten, and the job is one for which she is fitted by both personal inclinations and hereditary instincts.

"Woof! woof! woof!"

She furthermore announces that she is ready to bite the head off any one who lays a finger

on any member of her family. She stands ready to fight for them instead of expecting them to fight for her. Good for Beatrice!

"Woof! woof! woof!"

In spite of her high state of belligerency, Beatrice is evidently very proud of her interesting family. Others may be able to boast larger families, but none can boast a plumper or lustier brood. (Nine seems to be the right and mystic number with swine. Hasn't Shakespeare something about a sow and "her nine farrow"?) They were ready to fight for their rights and squeal their protests for fair play before they were an hour old. Every one who has approached the pen acknowledges that they are little beauties. They have the irresistible charm of youth—which can make even the young of a rattlesnake interesting, if not lovable. Beatrice has every reason to be proud of them, though there doesn't seem to be any reason for being so gruff about it. A couple of weeks ago the *Globe* accused me editorially of being lacking in love for Beatrice. I admit the charge, but claim that this is a merciful provision of nature. Pigs are only lovable when they are small and plump and roly-poly. Our love for them does not endure.

"At length the pig perceives it die away
And fade into the light of common day."

If it were not so we would not have the heart to slaughter our pigs and turn them into necessary bacon. By the time they are full-grown they have developed their piggish instincts to such an intolerable degree that we are glad to be rid of them. Instead of berating me for being lacking in affection, the editor should have drawn a lesson from the fact that when the time comes to turn our hogs into bacon we are mercifully enabled to do it without any wrench to our finer feelings. I protest that at the present time I view the little pigs with tenderness and affection, but when they are finally fattened I shall have no compunctions about loading them into a car and shipping them to Toronto—the place where every good Ontario pig goes when he dies.

Yesterday I arrived at the barnyard just in time to witness an exciting little scene. The boy who looks after the hens had neglected to take a pail with him when he went to the granary for chicken feed, and thought he could carry it safely in a straw hat. With his hatful of oats he turned to close the latch on the granary door, and Beatrice saw her chance. With

a quick rush she grabbed the hat by the crown. The boy turned with a yell, but it was too late. For a couple of seconds there was a tug-of-war —pull boy, pull pig, and then the hat tore apart. The boy had the brim and Beatrice had the crown with its load of oats. Holding her head aloft, as pigs do when trying to escape with some tid-bit, she held up the crown of the hat and rushed into her pen. She didn't spill a grain and had a good feed all to herself in a dark corner. The boy's first impulse was to cry, but when he saw me he began to scold about having Beatrice loose in the barnyard. The joke was spoiled for me later in the day when I found that it was my cow-breakfast hat that had provided the sow breakfast. The boy had worn it by mistake.

HUMAN NATURE IN ANIMALS

My dealings with birds and animals have convinced me that each of them has as distinct a character and personality as any human being.

It is a mistake to suppose that any quality, habit, trick, failing, weakness, virtue or other characteristic is peculiar to mankind. The

dumb ceratures about the place have every one of them. If I were to watch carefully I feel sure I could find instances of everything from the Seven Deadly Sins to the Seven Cardinal Virtues, and that without leaving the barnyard. It is all very well for us to talk about getting rid of our animal natures, as if that would mark an upward step in our development, but what interests me is how to rid the dumb creatures of what can only be described as their human natures. It is always the human things they do that arouse my wrath or make me laugh.

A GREAT DAY

It is a great day, an expansive day, a large day. The first thing that impressed me about it was its size. I know it is not customary to describe a day in terms of space, but there seems to be no way out of it. This is not a day of the kind that can be enjoyed in a house, or a field, or even within the rim of the horizon. It reaches up to the great neighbourly sun, and spreads as wide as the imagination. It is a day that overwhelms me, but, on thinking it over, I have found the key to its mystery. When I got up this morning it was the sun that first

fixed my attention. It came bustling over the horizon with the air of one about to start spring house-cleaning. It awakened the south wind, plucked the myriad icy fingers from the little rivulets and flooded the world with light and warmth. But it is hardly exact to speak of the sun as house-cleaning. It is really building a new home and using only the foundations and framework of the old. It is upholstering the hills, decorating the woods, and refurnishing the fields. In a few days it will recarpet the earth and tack down the green breadths with brass-headed dandelions. When that work is done we can get down to a consideration of the buds and flowers and birds and the exquisite little things of spring. To-day the invitation is to have an outing with the universe. Only the sun and his work are worth considering.

On a day like this it is hard to believe that the sun is ninety million miles away. Why, it is just up there in the sky, and is busy at our feet and all around us. I do not thank the astronomers for teaching me that it is so distant. I would much rather have the point of view of the Prince of Morocco, who protested:

> Mislike me not for my complexion,
> The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,
> To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.

All through the winter the sun may have been as far away as learned men say, but to-day it is visiting with us. It is at work in the back-yard and in the front yard and in the fields and woods. It is making the warm wind blow and the sweet sap flow, and making us all so happy that we drop into rhyme without noticing. But one cannot do justice to such a day as this even while sitting on a log in the sugar-bush and writing in the intervals of firing-up under the pan. To enjoy and describe it aright he should be able, in imagination, to sit on a mountain with his feet in a pleasant valley and his head aureoled with smoky haze. He should be conscious only of the kindly sun and of its footstool, the earth. His singing robes should be woven of golden sunshine, and—and—I guess I had better leave that sort of thing to the poets and put a few more sticks under the pan.

SPRING AND THE LIVESTOCK

The winter certainly appears to be over, and neither man nor beast is sorry. We have all been penned in altogether too long, and it feels good to be out in the open again. I notice that it affects the farm creatures in different

ways. The cattle seem unusually lazy, and during the heat of the day most of them lay down where they could let the sunshine soak into their skins. The colts started on a wild scamper around the fields and threw up mud in a way that made it necessary to close them up in the barnyard again, as they were cutting up the pasture. As they abused their freedom they had to be deprived of it. The sheep took things quietly, as might be expected, and I noticed that after a little run fat little Mary Belle stood panting with her mouth open. She and Clarissa and Strafe made a start at playing king of the castle on an ant-hill, but their mothers kept so close to them that they spoiled the fun.

Beatrice seemed to like the heat about as well as anything on the farm. She picked out a snug spot on the south side of what is left of the straw stack, and grunted pleasantly, while the sunshine tickled her fat sides. During the cold weather she made frequent investigating trips around the farm, but the heat seems to make her lazy. The most belligerent creature on the place is the turkey cock. He struts and gobbles and makes thunder with his wings in a most awesome way. Those who do the

chores have suggested that if he continues to be so threatening we shall have to put a ring in his nose and lead him around on a chain. He is certainly a noble bird.

FIRST SNOW

The snow was a surprise to all the youngsters of the barnyard. There had been flurries earlier in the season, but nothing to compare with the depth that now covers everything. When the colt was turned out he left the stable door at a run. His hoofs threw up a cloud of snow that frightened him, and he ran through the gate to the pasture field. The more he ran the more snow he threw up and the more scared he got. He galloped around the field until he was winded or decided that there was nothing to be frightened about. Then he obeyed an old instinct, pawed away a little patch of snow and began to eat the frozen grass. It was his first experience of snow, but he knew what to do in case he should be obliged to live on the pasture it covered. The colt was not the only youngster to have a first experience of snow on that morning. A flock of young pullets that have been accustomed to ranging freely

over the farm were completely flabbergasted by the situation. They huddled at the door of the henhouse, and whenever they tried to travel they did it a-wing. As they were not used to this method of locomotion they misjudged distances and fell protesting into the snow, where they stayed for a while before trying to walk. The young ducks that sleep under the granary did not venture on the snow until Sheppy routed them out on one of his investigating excursions. Even though nature has provided them with snowshoes in their web feet they preferred to try their wings, but they are so fat and heavy that their flying was a flat failure. They quacked across the barnyard with heads up and wings beating wildly, but their cute little tails and flat feet were still in the snow. The young turkeys also took to flying, and though they were more expert than any of the others the result was the same. They landed in snowdrifts and looked unhappy. One young gobbler landed on top of a haystack, where he stood up to his wishbone in the snow, waiting for a thaw to come and rescue him. I left him until the chores were done and then rescued him by pelting him with snowballs. Of course, this

trouble about the snow lasted only for a day or so. Ducks, hens and turkeys now get around much as usual.

A SPRING SHOWER

A few days ago we had an ideal shower, warm, still, and occasionally shot with sunshine. The necessity of doing the chores drove me out in it and I was glad. Putting on an old overcoat that did not owe me any money, and an old felt hat, long innocent of the block—it showed a quarter pitch from the peak to the brim—I slopped around for a happy half hour. But, though I was happy, the ducks were happier. They were not only in their element, but they were enjoying a banquet. The frost had come out of the ground and the angle-worms had come to the surface. I don't think the ducks missed one of them—all of which made me try to remember whether Darwin in his study of earthworms noted their economic value as poultry food. The hens are every bit as fond of them as the ducks, but they are not so fond of the rain. But there are other things that like to feel the warm splashy drops. I had to turn out the cows for a drink,

and the day seemed to suit them exactly. While old Fenceviewer I. was waiting to have her stall cleaned and her bed made up she humped her back against the shower and chewed her cud, and if she could have had a couple of hands stuck into pockets she would have made a perfect picture of contentment. And all the while I could hear the birds twittering and calling in the rain, and making different music from the kind we hear while the sun is shining. I was really sorry when the work was done and I had to clean my boots and put off my wet things and listen to a lecture on the chances I had taken of catching cold.

THANKSGIVING DAY

There are times when I think that a spirit of thankfulness is born in one rather than cultivated. When looking at things in this way I find it profitable to study the animals on the place. Somehow they seem to be very human in their emotions.

Their feelings are not complicated by efforts at reasoning, and in their every-day conduct they reveal their true spirits most amazingly.

Take the Red Cow for instance. Nothing seems to discourage her. She is too full of ambition to grumble about anything. If she doesn't manage to steal a march on me to-day she is quite sure that she will be able to do it to-morrow, and that keeps her in a constantly cheerful frame of mind. This year she had set her heart on getting into the corn field which was just across the fence from the pasture, but never once did she find an open gate or a break in the fence. She saw it grow from the first green sprouts to matured corn and never got a bite. It is now in the shock and being husked, but she still stretches her neck over the fence in the same hopeful way. She is going to get a feed out of that field before the year is out or know the reason why. Even if she doesn't manage it before the stalks are hauled in she'll find a gate open before the snow falls, and dig up the roots that were left by the hoe before she will give up her purpose. A cow like that is really an inspiration on the farm.

She was born that way and life always looks bright to her, because she always has something to hope for. Now, with the new cow, the one I bought, the case is entirely different. She must have come into the world feeling

discouraged. She has faith in nothing, hopes for nothing, and is always in a mournful frame of mind. Though she gets all the pumpkins she can eat and a good bunch of corn stalks every night, she simply can't cheer up. When we open the pasture gate the Red Cow makes a rush for the stable and gets into the wrong stall and eats all she can of some other cow's feed before she is driven to her place. But the new cow stands mournfully in the pasture. It is quite true that there were pumpkins last night and the night before and many nights before that, but she knows there will be none to-night and she bawls dismally at the thought. Finally some one has to go out into the field and drive her in, and when she gets to her stall she no sooner starts to eat than she looks over at what the other cows are having, and as well as she can with her mouth full, bawls complainingly that she didn't get as much as the rest, or that her pumpkins are not as yellow as the others. There is no satisfying her because she was born that way. It'll be the same on the 20th of October as on all other days. I wonder how many people in the country will be like her? As for me, I think I'll put a pumpkin just beyond the Red Cow's reach and

cultivate a cheerful spirit while watching the hopeful way she will go after it.

THE SAPLINGS

I sometimes wonder that I should be fond of trees, for when I was a boy trees were regarded almost as enemies. The land had to be cleared of them before crops could be sown, and they multiplied the labour of the pioneers. I learned to swing an axe by cutting down saplings, and ran "amuck" among them just as my elders did among the larger trees. In those far days trees were things to be destroyed, and no one thought of sparing them. But when I came back to the farm and found that the noble forest had dwindled to a small woodlot that had no young trees in it—because the cattle had nibbled down all seedlings for many years—I was seized by a rage for planting. Finding that the Government was willing to supply seedlings to any one who would plant them out, I immediately began the work of reforestation and planted thousands so that when the present trees mature and are cut out there will be others to take their place. These little trees are now thriving lustily, but they

seem to regard me with an air of aloofness, and I feel when among them as if they were looking at me furtively and trying to decide whether I am to be trusted. Perhaps there is still a tradition in the wood-lot of the havoc I wrought in my youth with just such tender saplings as these.

THE BOY AND THE OAK

Near the house there is a sturdy oak tree that I always think of as one of the oldest of my friends. When I was a growing boy it was just the right kind of a tree for me to chum with. It was not too big to climb, and yet it was big enough to take me on its back and carry me into all the dreamlands of childhood. Among its whispering branches I found lands as wonderful as Jack climbed to on his bean-stalk. And it had a stout right arm that was strong enough to hold up a swing on which I swung and dreamed for more hours than the teachers of to-day would consider right.

Yesterday while I was sitting at some distance from the home oak, admiring the curved spread of its branches, a barefoot boy came out of the house. Without seeing me he walked

straight to the tree and then looked up at its inviting branches. After a while he got a piece of a rail and placed it against the trunk. Then with clutching fingers and spreading toes he worked his way up to the lowest branch. Through the higher branches he clambered as if going up a ladder, and finally, when he found one to his liking, he bestrode it, with his back to the trunk, and looked away to the south. For a long time, with childish gravity, he gave himself up to the "long, long thoughts" of a boy. At last his eyes began to rove around and presently they rested on me, where I was watching him. He laughed in a shame-faced way as if he had been surprised in doing something that he would have kept secret, but I laughed back joyously and we understood. I am glad that there is another of my name who will love the old oak and the other trees and to whom they will perhaps give their friendship even more fully than they have given it to me.

THIN AIR AND THICK

Have you ever noticed how the sounds carry on some winter mornings? One day last week we had a few hours when I felt as if I were

eavesdropping on the whole country-side. The air was very still, and judging from the way the smoke fell to the ground it was very light. When I went out to do the chores I was struck at once by the clearness with which I could hear things going on. I could hear the neighbours talking to their cattle, and somewhere about a mile away an angry man was reasoning with an impenitent pig. I could hear what what he said to the pig and what the pig said to him, and judging by what the pig said I think the man must have kicked him while pouring swill into the trough. Every sound started an echo that went bounding over the fields. I could hear a train moving on the Michigan Central Railroad twelve miles away and almost imagined I could hear the people in the town three miles off frying their breakfast bacon and grumbing about the high cost of living. I understand that the carrying quality of the air is due to its being thin or rarefied. According to the papers some inventor has increased the power of the telephone by having the air in the receiver warmed by some new device. The principle on which he works is probably the same as prevailed on this particular morning. The ease with which

sounds carried was due to the condition of the atmosphere, and that reminds me that at other times the air must be very heavy and dead. Anyway, I know that there are days when I cannot make a boy in the next room hear that the wood-box is empty even when I yell at the top of my voice. Now that must be due to the condition of the atmosphere, and I have noticed that the best way to overcome the difficulty is to warm things up.

JIM COOK'S VOTE*

Though all votes are equally sacred, all votes are not equally important. By no means. When an election is on, the high are made low, and the low are made high. I am told on the best authority that when an election is at hand the party managers get together in the back room of a saloon or the classroom of a church, or wherever such men meet, and go over the voters' list. As the names are put in alphabetical order, Mr. Abou Ben Adhem, the righteous and virtuous, comes first as usual. What about him?

* From "Ourselves"—"A Magazine for Cheerful Canadians." No. 1.

"Aw, he don't count. He's sure to vote the Grit ticket, just as his father did before him. Scratch off his name!"

Another highly respected name is read off.

"Scratch off Mr. Ollie Alright" says a voice of authority. "He is a Tory, as all of his folks are. No one needs to bother about him."

In that way all the outspoken, important citizens are dealt with. They are sure to vote, and to vote in a known way,—and consequently their votes are of no importance.

But how about Jim Cook?

Now we are getting down to business!

Nobody knows how Jim will vote. He is a half-witted citizen who does chores around the village. We simply must get Jim's vote or else the other fellows will get it. A committee is appointed right there to look after Jim Cook. Exactly the same little comedy is gone through with by the managers of the other party, where they have met in the back room of another saloon, or classroom. Jim Cook's vote is so important that two committees have to be appointed to get control of it.

. . . . .

In the last election it was my privilege to watch the comedy of getting Jim Cook's vote

from start to finish. Just after the Jim Cook committees had been appointed, the Reeve, who was a member of the Tory committee, was coming up town when he spied the object of his care.

"Hello, Jim," he called cheerily, addressing him for the first time since he had needed his vote for his own election. But Jim was too simple-minded to notice such neglect. He sunned up instantly.

"Hello, Dan."

"Are you busy to-day?"

"Yes, I got quite a lot to do to-day. I got to clean out the box-stall at the livery and—a lot of other things."

In a way Jim was vaguely fond of work. That is, he liked to have something in sight to do so that if any one came along and offered him a job of real work he would have an excuse for refusing. When the Reeve spoke to him in that cheery way he suspected real work, and lied about the box-stall job as readily and instinctively as a child.

"Oh, there's no hurry," said the Reeve, with a touch of relief in his voice. "Our back yard needs cleaning up, and I thought you might like to earn a dollar by doing it. But there's no

hurry. Any time you are not busy will do." He had dealt with Jim before and knew how useless it was to secure his favour too early in the campaign. Jim was entirely lacking in what Croker, of Tammany Hall, called the great political virtue of staying bought. He had no memory and he always voted with the man who had been good to him last. Of course, he was such a leaky vessel that he could not be bought in the usual straight-forward way of passing him two dollars. He had to be fawned upon and flattered like the sovereign voter he was. The Reeve was really glad that Jim was not ready to go to work at once. It was enough to have him on the string. He could attend to him later.

The arrangement also suited Jim to a dot. He had the honour of having a job to do for the Reeve, and there was no hurry about doing it. When the completeness of his good luck dawned on him his big moon face glowed with pleasure, and he started up town about a block behind the Reeve.

Now the leading grocer was the chairman of the Grit Jim Cook committee, and he hailed Jim's approach with real pleasure.

"Hello, Jim."

"Hello, Bert."

"Busy to-day?"

"Yes, I am. I got a job to clean up the Reeve's back yard."

"Well, I'm in no hurry, but I thought you might like to make a dollar by cleaning out the cistern for me. It has been dry all summer and it won't be a hard job. After you have cleaned the Reeve's back-yard you come and clean my cistern." The grocer winked at himself as he closed this deal, for he, too, knew the advantage of being the last man to be in Jim's good graces. Jim went on up town so happy he walked past a lot of old friends without noticing them. Two jobs on hand, one for the Reeve and one for Elder Brown, and both so far away in the future that he had no need to hurry! The pay would be sure when he did the work and he was in a position to refuse all work that might be offered to him by common people! He was full of these happy reflections when he reached the post-office, where Al Hyse was just in the act of taking a chew of Mule Ear tobacco.

"Hello, Jim."

"Hello, Al."

"Have a chew."

"I don't care if I do." Mule Ear was Jim's favourite "chewin'," though it seldom came his way. He took a bite worthy of so important an occasion and started to hand back the plug.

"That's all right," said Al in his largest manner, "just keep that, Jim. I laid in five pounds of it last night."

Five pounds of Mule Ear! Gee Whiz! Al Hyse was surely a man worth standing in with. Of course, it goes without saying that Al was a member of the Tory Jim Cook committee.

Only a little was lacking to make Jim's cup overflow, and it was not lacking long. He had barely softened the edges of his cud when Sim Bremner and Hank Black slanted across the street towards the American House. Both were members of the Grit Jim Cook committee.

"Hist! Jim!"

Jim looked around slowly. He caught Hank Black's eye.

Hank winked significantly and jerked his thumb towards the side door of the bar. Jim obeyed the summons with surprise but without hesitation.

From that time on life for him was one grand sweet song. I don't know that I ever

saw any one who had things come his way more delightfully than Jim did, unless, perhaps, a member of parliament just before the appropriations are voted on. To see a new member and a lobbyist together at such a time is a touching sight. While the head waiter has the towel-covered bottle of champagne between his knees and is drawing the cork, the emotion-shaken lobbyist leans over and tells how happy he is—and there is a little choke of joy in his voice as he tells it. He never knew what friendship meant, and life was as flat as a bran-mash to him before he won the friendship of Mr. Gladdened Hand, M.P. Oh, yes, it is a touching sight, but unfortunately in the end it is ourselves, the taxpayers, who get touched.

Of course, they overdid the thing, but it was a close riding and as there was a fellow of the Jim Cook stripe in practically every polling division the energies of both parties were centred on their votes. As for Jim, he took everything that was coming to him. He sat in the front window of the American House with his feet up on the window sill, chewing Tory Mule Ear tobacco and sweating out Grit beer and developing an independent spirit.

Hardly a day passed but a new favour came his way. A member of one Jim Cook committee or the other would be sure to have a ticket for a circus or a ball game that he did not need, and Jim saw that it was not wasted. Both sides had Jim's pledge of support at least fifty times since the campaign began. He had cheered for both parties, according to which committee it was that took him to the political rally. On such occasion the scorn with which he looked at all members of the other party was fine and convincing to people who did not know Jim, but on the following night he might be found at another rally scorning his previous friends and tearing a lung loose cheering for some new political hero. It was all very discouraging to the practical men who look after such matters.

On the day before the election a desperate move was decided upon. The Tory Jim Cook committee decided to kidnap their charge and keep him in seclusion until voting time. Al Hyse took the job in hand.

"I say, Jim," he remarked after passing over another plug of Mule Ear, "I just feel like playing hookey and getting out of town till all this election fuss is over. I know of a quiet

little place where they have plenty of good beer on tap and no one around."

"Gee, that would be fine!"

"Well, say, suppose you and I leg it the same as we used to when kids."

As Jim was still in the child stage of development the idea swept him off his feet.

"Great. When will we start?"

"Oh, we mustn't be seen going together. You sneak out of town quietly and hide in the bushes at the other side of the sawmill. I'll be along with my fast driver by four o'clock, and we'll skip out."

Prompt to the minute Jim was at the appointed place, full of mystery and excitement. Al took him straight to an old roadhouse of ancient evil repute, known as "The Deadfall." It was located seven miles from town and they could rest in peace until Jim was needed. It was a beautiful plan and would have worked all right if it had not been the yearly practice to kidnap him, and Elder Brown was not taken by surprise. He had hired Willie Carsons to shadow Jim for a week before the election. Willie was twelve years old and took to sleuthing as kindly as a sick kitten to a hot brick. He kept Jim in sight during his wak-

ing hours, and when he spied on the meeting at the old mill he stole a bicycle and kept close to the fugitives. Luckily it was a Grit bicycle he took or an otherwise promising political career might have been nipped in the bud by a term in the reformatory. As it was, Elder Brown squared matters with the owner of the bicycle and proceeded to circumvent the enemy. About midnight the occupants of "The Deadfall" were roused by the telegraph operator from a neighbouring village who brought a message for Al.

"Come home at once. The Jersey fell in the well.—Mother."

The Jersey cow was Al's most treasured possession. And he had been talking of having that well fixed for a year, for fear she might fall in. Perhaps his wits were scattered by the amount of drinking he had to do to keep the now seasoned Jim Cook in condition, but he never hesitated a minute. He got out his fast trotter and burned the distance home. When he found his wife asleep and the Jersey safe he did not need to be told what had happened. He swore for a while and then put up his horse and went to bed. Of course, no one could prove it was Elder Brown who had

forged the telegram, or that it was his eldest son dressed in a woman's clothes who had passed himself off to the new telegraph operator as Mrs. Hyse. Such things as forgery and impersonation are merely jokes to both parties when an election is on. Everybody seems agreed that such things must be at every famous victory.

Jim closed his period of high life by coming to the polls in an automobile, while such excellent citizens as Mr. Abou Ben Adhem and Mr. Ollie Alright trudged afoot and took his dust. Everybody knew how they would vote and their votes were unimportant, compared with Jim Cook's.

Why was Jim Cook's vote so important? Simply because no one knew how he would vote. If a respectable citizen took the position that he would vote only for the man who would give good public service, both parties might give him pledges that they would have to live up to if they expected a continuance of his support. I don't know, but it seems to me that "those of us who have good wits" might get just as much fun out of our votes as Jim Cook did out of his. If even the boys who are coming of age when I am made up their minds to be

independent they might accomplish much good and have lots of fun putting bent pins on the seats of the mighty. In any case I do not intend to let my vote be so unimportant that it will be scratched off by the political workers. It seems to me there is a moral to this Jim Cook story, though I am not enough of a politician to set it down in so many words. What do you think about it?

A couple of days later the Reeve sprained his ankle kicking Jim Cook off his place because he needed money to keep up the pace at which he was living and had started to clean up the back yard. It seems to me that there is a moral connected with this also.

DIOGENES

Diogenes' objection to having Alexander stand between him and the sun was one of the wisest things ever uttered. What are all our conquerors and captains of industry and great men doing but standing between us and the sun? Diogenes had stripped life to its essentials and was showing the people of Athens how a free-souled philosopher should live. With a tub for shelter, a piece of cloth

for covering, and a crust to eat, he had all that a man must have physically, and by employing his ample leisure in developing his own personality he was able to make himself bulk as large in history as the slaughtering Alexander. If he allowed himself to be misled by ambition or false ideals of any kind he would lose his place in the sun. Alexander was standing between everybody and the sun at that time. The philosopher merely expressed a great truth in a symbolical way.

INSECTS AS GUIDES TO CONDUCT

The more I consider insects the more I am convinced that our moralists must give up drawing lessons from them. Although the ant is industrious she never lays up more food than is needed for a hard winter, and no ant hill that I have ever investigated has revealed anything suggestive of the most approved forms of modern thrift. The ants have nothing to correspond with our industrial system, with its mergers and watered stocks. The bee is nearest to man in these matters, and see what a fool she is. She lays up treasure where the moth can corrupt and thieves break in and

steal. A great majority of the bees work themselves to death without ever getting a chance to enjoy the treasures they have stored up. If you provide them with comfortable quarters and plenty of white clover blossoms they will go on producing like farmers without ever noticing who is getting the profits of their work. Although bees have been much favoured by fabulists I think that they should really be regarded as horrible examples.

PETTING A BEE

Yesterday I got a reply to a question that roused my imagination and has had me guessing ever since. One of the boys came smashing into the house and began to hunt clamourously for the iodine bottle.

"What's the matter?" I inquired anxiously.

"Got stung."

"How did that happen?"

"I was petting a bumble-bee and he stung me on the end of the finger."

By the time I recovered my powers of speech I had had time for reflection and knew it would never do to spoil a good thing by asking how one should go about the business of petting a

bumble-bee. I loathe these crass materialists who always want to have everything explained. The idea of trying to pet a bee was so novel and so youthfully original that I accepted it joyously and did not want to make it commonplace by asking foolish questions. Personally I wouldn't think of petting a bumble-bee any more than I would of petting the Bankers' Association. I would feel as sure of being stung in one case as in the other. There are some things that one simply does not think of as pets. But lest some one should ask why I lug in the Bankers' Association as a comparison I will explain. It is due to a little parody that popped into my head:

How doth the busy little bank
Improve the shining hours?
By making honey all the day
From other people's flowers.

MORAL LAWS

From my tree-top I could see that I really have neighbours. As I realized this I was struck by the thought that all our activities take place within a few feet of the ground. In spite of our boasted freedom of action we are the slaves of the law of gravity which keeps us

"crawling 'twixt the earth and heaven." But because we can walk and run and travel in trains, and even fly a little, we think ourselves entirely free and are not conscious of the fact that gravity binds us as with chains. Who knows but in a similar way our actions, both moral and intellectual, are governed by laws of which we are unconscious?

MODERN SPEED

A man can now go to a place and back so quickly that it is hardly worth his while to have gone, and in the transmission of news such perfection has been attained that many things that happen on the other side of the earth are announced here, with appropriate headlines, even before they happen.

AN ARISTOCRACY OF CHARACTER

The most pressing need of the Empire is a new aristocracy in which the highest place will be accorded to those who inherit the spirit of great men rather than to those who languidly inherit their blood.

ANTHOLOGY

MUDDLED ETHICS

Most of the wars and afflictions that have come on the world are due to attempts made by incompetent people to be their brothers' keepers.

EPIGRAMS

After all the easiest way to get money is to earn it.

I like to keep my feet on the earth—in good Canadian mud—even while indulging the wildest flights of imagination.

Our observations and our thoughts are for ever being woven into a wonderful tapestry of life, and we are a part of the pattern.

Man makes all his first inventions in the most complex way possible, and it takes him years before he can hit on the simple and obvious way of doing things.

Simplicity makes our work easier; it may yet make our living more enjoyable.

PETER McARTHUR

LEISURE

They need a professor of leisure in connection with the Agricultural Department to teach the value of leisure on the farm, how to secure it and how to enjoy it. The world has been reduced to such a condition by work that we need to be taught how to enjoy ourselves and grow.

HARVESTING BEAUTY

The beauty of the world needs to be harvested and stored away in the memory just as carefully as the crops that are now causing us so much concern. The memory of what is beautiful should be as precious to us as full granaries.

MORALITY

The sinner gets many pleasant pickings that never fall in the way of the righteous.

ICONOCLASM

Every clear statement of truth is a blasphemy against error.

AN APPRECIATION

AN APPRECIATION

ETER McARTHUR is alive; nor is any part of him dead. The sturdy, robust figure seen tramping over his farm, and occasionally glimpsed upon the streets of Toronto, radiates health and vigour. The energy of his body, almost youthful despite his fifty-seven years, is matched by an agile intellect. His fiery Gælic blood supplies him with ever new enthusiasms; and, naturally, his dislikes are as strong as his sympathies. He loves Nature, and all forms of life, and cherishes an unshakable faith in the God of Nature and of Life.

Peter McArthur's continued growth is disconcerting. So long as it continues, no conclusive account of his literary achievements is possible. To attempt one would be like starting a novel with the certain knowledge that no final chapter can be written. When with him, one is constantly aware of his potentialities, disturbed by the suspicion that the man is about to do something unexpected.

His record tends to confirm such an impression. He is constantly reaching back across the years to resume work laid aside in earlier life; and sometimes he is found engaged in the unprecedented. After talking with him, one feels that his most important work lies in the future. Because of his physical vitality and mental virility, and because his career to date has been so surprising, it will not be in the least surprising if this turns out to be the case.

For these reasons, the orderly development, which the smug critic so dearly loves to trace from turbulent youth to serene dotage, marking off successive phases with neat little gravestones, and placing a large marble urn to serve as emphatic period, cannot be undertaken in the case of Peter McArthur. In his work are apparent certain definite lines of activity, and these will be discussed; but the literary portrait in its conventional entirety, with all stray ends gathered up and ticketed, is out of the question. His progress as a writer has been too chaotic; and he is altogether too much alive to stand quietly while the usual embalming fluids are being applied.

But there is one feature of regularity about our subject: those leanings which he mani-

fested earliest he has followed with more tenacity than is at first apparent from a survey of his eccentric course. We find him as a lad on the farm writing poems. We see him, at about the same period, planning and beginning to publish in the Strathroy *Age* a series of articles describing every phase of farm life. By the next year, while a freshman at college, he has become a professional joke-writer. To-day, he is known most widely by his seemingly interminable series of short essays descriptive of farm activities. Though publication of these was commenced fifteen years ago, it still continues regularly, and they now extend to an aggregate length of nearly two million words. With a probable twenty years of creative endeavour before him, he has a reasonable chance of realizing his youthful ambition, and rounding out the performance in a really generous fashion. His present international reputation as a homourist has made his name familiar to many readers throughout the English-speaking world. And while his verses written during maturity are most uneven in quality, a discriminating few recognize that Peter McArthur, at his best, is a poet of unusual ability.

Thus he began as a poet, as descriptive essayist dedicated to rural life, and as humourist; and in these three capacities he has made his mark. He has turned his hand to many a thing besides—particularly in the eighteen years he lived in New York and London. But, allowing for such notable exceptions as "The Affable Stranger," it is these three aspects of his work which deserve our attention. It should be emphasized, however, that it is not upon the boy's productions, but upon their outgrowth—the man's productions—that his claims to our notice are based. Between the two were years of struggle and adventure, startlingly sudden successes and equally unlooked-for reversals of fortune. No correct, nor even fair, critical appraisal can be made unless the similiarties and differences between the man and the boy are held clearly in mind. What the boy was may be easily imagined from the biographical data given elsewhere. Let us look at the original and picturesque character, who is now a national figure.

Few men have been an integral part of so many sides of the nation's life. And out of this wealth of experience have come knowledge and sympathy—first-hand knowledge of actual

conditions in many fields of endeavour, and the development of those faculties which have enabled him faithfully to record and adequately to interpret them.

While far from being an academic type, he has contacted university life; and his many years of intensive study of the English classics have given him a grasp of literature which might well be envied by a pedagogue. Though interested in politics, he is of all parties and of no party. One of his strongest and cleverest satires, "Jim Cook's Vote," is a burlesque on election methods under the party system. He has lived in London and New York, but selects Canada for his permanent place of residence. Knowing the life of our cities, he prefers the rural districts. There is something in him so bitterly alien to the aims and ordinary conduct of modern commerce that one would never suspect his personal connection with it. Yet the core of modern business is salesmanship; and the essence of salesmanship is advertising; and Peter McArthur has been, and, to some extent, still is, a noted producer of advertising "copy." When one remembers some of his frequently expressed sentiments about money making and monopolies and

banks, there is a certain irony in recalling "The Ghost and the Burglar," the short story which he wrote as an advertisement of Yale locks. Man of business, journalist, editor, he is far prouder of being known as a farmer.

Peter McArthur poses as a plain, ordinary man; but, actually, he is only able to maintain his reputation for simplicity by virtue of that versatility which makes it possible for him to be what the school-boy said Cæsar's wife was —"all things to all men." He is, indeed, a complex man, a rich, vibrant personality, impinging upon contemporary life at so many points that a hundred varied types call him brother. It is instructive to watch him in a hotel lobby, and to note the men who speak to him. Farmers, cabinet ministers, vagabonds, college professors, financiers—all seem to approach him with varying degrees of intimacy; but the observer will find that the more distinguished or prominent the acquaintance, the more deferential will be his mode of greeting Peter McArthur. Such a man can hardly be the guileless, unsophisticated person he often makes himself out to be. "I'm a real farmer; I have a farm with a mortgage, a hired man, and a sick cow." Many have been taken

in by that kind of talk. The time has come to expose him, and to present the serious man of letters, beautifully disguised as a jocular rustic.

Nine persons out of ten, if asked to name Peter McArthur's chief title to a place in Canadian literature, would make, unhesitatingly, some kind of reference to the "farm" articles in the Toronto *Globe*. The tenth would uphold him as a humourist. All would be wrong, though their verdicts would represent perfectly the current, popular estimation of his work. After sifting the entire mass of his writings, it is his poetry which is found to possess the greatest degree of literary merit.

There are reasons for the existing misconception. The sum total of his published verse is insignificant in bulk compared to his voluminous prose. In the earlier part of his career he must have been anxious to excel as a poet, because he destroyed ruthlessly all his verses that he did not think worthy of permanent preservation. On entering high school he burned all poems written up to that time, making of the event a ceremony which he called a "dedication to Vulcan." So there are no *juvenilia* extant. Vulcan must have received many similar burnt offerings from time to time, be-

cause all that remain to us of the poet's endeavours during the first forty-one years of his life are the forty-one short poems included in "The Prodigal," and a few lyrics to be found in the privately printed collection, called "Lines." "The Prodigal," small as it is, is the only collection that has ever been available to the public.

If the story ended there, we should have more right to be indignant that his name is not generally included in the list of Canada's more important poets than, in view of the full circumstances, we can be. For, since the appearance of "The Prodigal" in 1907, its author has published in various journals a large number of poems. A few of these are equal in merit to those in "The Prodigal," one or two even surpassing that high standard; but many of them are mediocre, and a great number—probably the majority—are merely topical verses which often fall to the level of propagandist doggerel. As a result of this unfortunate practice the reader who is accustomed to encountering these fragmentary jingles will only stare incredulously when he is told that Peter McArthur is a great poet, and that his one small book is well worth seeking out. Had

he retained the habit of earlier days, and exercised his former sound discrimination in self-criticism, he would not occupy to-day the equivocal position he does as a poet.

Even as it is, it seems certain that Peter McArthur's poetry will, one day, be both more highly and more widely esteemed than it is now. If much of the ephemeral verse of later years is to disappear, as is to be expected and hoped, it is still more likely that an even greater proportion of his prose is already well on its way to oblivion; and that the future proportions between the two will be more just. Most of the selections in "The Prodigal" and the best of the poems not included therein stand secure, an achievement of great and enduring value.

Analysis of "The Prodigal" is fruitful. Considering the poems in this volume first from the standpoint of content, or thought, we find they fall into six classes, as follows: patriotic, 1; songs, 2; tributes to individuals, 4; humourous poems and light verse, 4; descriptive, 9; the poet's own philosophy, 21.

"An Ode of Empire," the one indication of Peter McArthur's strong national bias, is typical of his whole attitude towards his native land.

While he always avoids "flag waving," and other banal expressions of cheap patriotic sentiment, it should never be forgotten that of all Canada's literary expatriates he has been the only one to return to live among us. During his years in the United States, he established a high reputation for cleverness and literary skill. Had he remained there, he would undoubtedly have become a richer man financially than he is, and he would probably have received more noisy public acclaim than he has had from us. This reticence in babbling of his love for his country is not due to lack of feeling, nor to Scotch caution in articulating emotion, but rather to the fact—made so apparent in his "philosophic" writings—that he considers deeds the highest and sincerest index of feeling. Consequently he has left to others the framing of ecstatic eulogies of Canada, content himself to let his actions speak for him.

The individuals, to whom lines are addressed are Sarah Bernhardt, Shakespeare, Bob Fitzsimmons and Duncan McKellar. While "To Bernhardt" and "All In," the free verse ode to the prize-fighter at the moment of his defeat, have each a certain note of originality, they

are not nearly as fine, in either conception or execution, as the sonnets to Shakespeare and Duncan McKellar. Shakespeare has been a lifelong source of inspiration to Peter McArthur; and this memorial poem is much more than the traditional lip service:

" . . let others on his music dote,
And burnish every line with housewife care,
With glutton learning get his words by rote
And fail to find the spirit prisoned there!
For while I read, as thrilled by fire I start
To feel the pulsing of the poet's heart."

Peter McArthur's love for Duncan McKellar, the friend of his youth, has been one of the most beautiful things in his life. The miniature threnody arising from that relationship is instinct with manly dignity and that pure passion which underlies and sustains all great poetry.

The three humourous poems, "A Parent's Plea," "To the Birds," and "To Sponsors for D. C. McArthur," are riotous in their fun. The whimsicality of "A Parent's Plea" and the full-lunged mirth of the christening ode raise these verses above the domestic level on which they were conceived and place them in a relatively high position upon the syllabus of Canadian light verse. There is something, too, of more

than momentary pleasure in seeing pessimism treated with ironic scorn as the birds are upbraided for their spontaneity:

"'Tis clear to me, you've never read
The turgid tomes that Ibsen writes,
Nor mourned with Tolstoi virtue dead,
Nor over Howells pored o' nights:
For you are glad with all your power;
For shame! Go study Schopenhaüer."

The nine descriptive poems, five of which are quoted in the anthology, reveal Peter McArthur's intense love of nature, and his accuracy of perception and memory. Their number is significant. Delight in the natural, and often commonplace, objects by which he is surrounded is characteristic not only of much of the best of his poetry, but also of a great deal of his more memorable prose. "The silken parachutes of the milkweed," a phrase taken from "In Pastures Green,"* is typical of thousands containing an almost Tennysonian realism in their combination of metaphor and botany. While he is quite capable of turning into sermons the more purely scientific aspects of the processes of nature, he evidently believes that in her decorative capacity she should be admired simply. His clever satirizing of

* p. 255.

AN APPRECIATION

"Peter Bell"* is at once keen criticism and an intimate confession on the part of the critic. Wordsworth blames Peter Bell because

> "A primrose by the river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more."

Peter McArthur mischievously points to

> " 'My heart leaps up when I behold
> A rainbow in the sky;
> So was it when my life began;
> So is it now I am a man;
> So be it when I shall grow old,
> Or let me die!'

"There is nothing in that to suggest that he considered a rainbow as anything but a rainbow. There is no hint of the study of the laws of refraction or of the symbolism which makes the rainbow a pledge that the world will never again be destroyed by water. In fact, we might parody 'Peter Bell' and say:

> "A rainbow on the horizon's rim
> A glorious rainbow was to him,
> And it was nothing more.

"Because Wordsworth, the man, accepted the rainbow as he did when a child he gave us a perfect gem of poetry. And everything else in the world is just as poetical if approached in the same childlike spirit."

Here we have the key to Peter McArthur as nature poet. He records phenomena, imprisons fleeting scenic effects, trusting that

* "In Pastures Green," pp. 125-127.

his own feelings of ecstasy or depression—more usually the former—will be transmitted to the reader by bare description.

Quite different in spirit are the poems setting forth Peter McArthur's attitude towards human life. These number twenty-one in "The Prodigal," thus establishing a majority of one over all other classes combined. In them is the heart and soul of the poet's philosophy and message. Here everything is bent to didactic ends. "Growth" uses the planting and fertilization of the seed to illustrate his cardinal doctrine of the development of soul through natural nutriment drawn from the soil of life. In this poem, as in "The True Evangel," "Courage," and many another, we find concentrated insistence upon evolution in its wider sense. The word "grow" is, for Peter McArthur, the supreme commandment from God to all the creatures of His universe:

"All God's word is but the one word 'grow' !" *

Believing, as Peter McArthur does, that life has a spiritual rather than a material basis, understanding the ways of the heart, and, above

* From "The Priest of Amen-Ra" (unpublished).

all, valuing so highly such transcendental qualities as faith and aspiration,

"Aspiring dreams shall gloss what ill befel,
For he whose thoughts are pure hath builded well,"*

the preacher in him is, nevertheless, constantly preoccupied with conduct. His tendency to exalt "duty," and to place, apparently, more store in actions than in intentions, desires, and the inner relation of the soul to life, seems a little odd and out of keeping with the main body of his thought as shown by the generality of his writings. Possibly this trait is due to the poet's strict upbringing, and is an echo of sermons heard in childhood in the Old Free Kirk.

However that may be, this element is incongruous in the man's character. His oft-repeated emphasis upon actions as the supreme test of the worth of people's souls and lives is untrue in itself, and strangely inconsistent with the rest of Peter McArthur's utterances during the protracted intervals when he forgets to talk like the catechism, as

"And highest thought is ever told in deeds."†

* "Dreams," from "The Prodigal," p. 20.
† "Reticence," from "The Prodigal," p. 22.

Yet that element persists, and because of it we must modify somewhat the expression of our satisfaction over this body of philosophic poetry which, in spite of this regrettable factor, is representative of so much that is fine and lofty and noble in contemporary thought.

In the pages of "The Prodigal" the man's soul lies before us "touched to fine issues," and in it we discern moral courage, manly resolution to live out the best that is in him, boundless optimism founded on a faith that is both reasoned and instinctive, a capacity for spiritual responsibility, unfailing sympathy, and a vision keen to detect fraud, and withal, a precious, natural and all-embracing altruism, miles removed from the priggish sanctimoniousness which cloaks assumed generosity.

Turning now to a consideration of poetic style, an outstanding point is that twenty-three out of the forty-one selections are in sonnet form. These are excellent without exception: the finest of them must take rank beside the sonnets of Archibald Lampman as among the choicest examples of Canadian poetic literature. "The Ocean Liner" and "The Salt Marshes" are technical

triumphs, in which condensation of thought and economy of language are matched with verbal felicity and that perfect balance which is the sure indication of the mastery of the sonnet form. Both poems are essentially pictorial. "The Ocean Liner" has been included in the anthology because it is more simply a piece of description. "The Salt Marshes," with panoramic sweep widening and curving till the perfect sphere is visualized, is entirely symbolic in intent—a gesture of acceptance of life and destiny—the expression of an attitude more clearly exemplified in other sonnets, no less perfect structurally, but selected for the anthology because of their obviously philosophic trend as well as for the merits of their versification.

It is true that in "The Ocean Liner" the huge steamship is spoken of as a

> "symbol of the age's mastering pride,"

but that is incidental; the inspiration of the poem must have been the graphic possibilities of the scene. Consequently, in it we have a somewhat rare opportunity of seeing the verbal artist at work, unmindful of the didactic potentialities of his subject matter. There is no

moralizing connected with the steamer's progress. She vanishes seaward as, characteristically, her metal throat

> " . . . . proclaims
> With raucous voice her strong supremacy."

The ability to construct sonnets has been considered, and rightly, one of the surest tests of a poet's skill. When such aptness is encountered as that which went to the making of "Aspiration," "The True Evangel," and "Earthborn," one entertains high hopes for the worth of verses cast in other moulds. Realizing this, Peter McArthur, with engaging insolence, has introduced his free verse "Chant of Mammonism" by the following "Apology":

> "Dear critic, lest you think that I have chosen
> A rhymeless, footless form through lack of skill
> To make mere words obedient to my will,
> I'll turn a sonnet, and my ease disclose in
> The straightest form that 'mincing poetry' goes in
> When she would walk on the Parnassian hill,
> Or from clear Castalay would drink her fill—
> A fount that in these later days is frozen.
>
> "Had I so wished I could have jigged in rhyme,
> Or in blank verse have walked with stately tread
> Or in smooth prose—most difficult of all—
> Have shown my thought to this distempered time.
> But I appear in disarray instead,
> When, moved to scorn, I dip my pen in gall."

Unfortunately, what follows is not worth the pains of putting together so neat an introduction. But the case is very different with the lyrics following the opening sonnet sequence in "The Prodigal." "An Indian Wind Song" —to take the finest of the series—is pure music, with exceptional merits of rhythm and cadence. The continuous and well-sustained use of onomatopœia, adequate and pleasing at every turn, is a proof of its author's poetic genius. Added to that device, there are the four striking metaphors, rarely beautiful in themselves, and worked out with an appropriateness of detail that is simply exquisite. The imaginative splendour of this poem leaves one with a similar sense of natural magic that results from a reading of "The Cloud," "To a Skylark" or the "Ode to the West Wind."

The heterogeneous nature of the verses published since "The Prodigal and Other Poems" has been spoken of. Why one who could, and did, perform such early feats did not continue to do so can only be understood by recalling that the work of Canadian poets is not, generally speaking, a merchantable commodity; and that to make it so our poets must stoop to the construction of frankly popu-

lar, and necessarily poor, work. Being under a biological requirement to partake of a little food occasionally, a poet like Peter McArthur must look elsewhere for an income.

Yet a few good things have come from his pen in more recent years, as, for instance, the New Year's ode published in the *Globe* in January, 1923, and "A Ballad of Homes," still unpublished. And the crowning achievement of the poet's career not only followed "The Prodigal," but its coming was scarcely foreshadowed therein.

Peter McArthur's attempts at free verse form an amazing, almost an alarming, sequence. In "The Prodigal" there appeared "All In," a tribute to a champion heavy-weight boxer, nice enough, but unremarkable, betokening no skill in that intricate poetic form, which—to contradict the poet flatly on the theory of a style in which he has exhibited such proficience—is not "formless" at all. Then, years later, suddenly, with magnificent swing and sweep of line, "The Stone" presented itself to our astonished gaze. It is a masterpiece of Canadian poetry, combining altruism and horse sense, humour and dignity, lofty vision and lowly practicality. As the narrative rests

upon fact and points a moral, it is thoroughly representative of its begetter. Nor is any one thing that he has written better fitted to stand as his monument, for he is spending his own life trying to "remove stones from the path of the people."

"The Stone" is from the "Epic of John Smith, the Common Man," of which no other part has been published except "A Chant of War," which shares in lesser degree the qualities that make "The Stone" unique.

Finally, in 1922, there appeared "A Chant of Mammonism," which would be put down at once as burlesque free verse were it not for the prose preface stating that the poem is an advertisement written in the belief that "the critic of the future will find the most important contributions to our literature in the advertisements that announce and commend our commercial and industrial adventures." In that rash prediction the author seems to be a false prophet, and when we note what he says about free verse being a "formless" mode of writing, we must conclude regretfully that "The Stone" was a "sport" of nature, a literary accident, and that we may not reasonably hope to see it equalled. But, as said previously, one cannot

be at all certain as to what Peter McArthur will or will not do. The only conclusion we may safely draw is that the best of his poems already published are particularly good, and will surely outlive him; and that it is in his poetry that we find the greatest degree of literary merit, as well as his finest thought.

Passing to the oceanic stretches of his prose, the studies of farm life taken collectively are, next to his poems, his greatest achievement. Sharing with thousands of his fellow inhabitants of Ontario a loyalty to the Toronto *Globe* at once touching and a little quaint, Peter McArthur's name has become, through the association, a household word in that Province, and is familiar enough beyond its borders. Since 1908 that venerable, and entirely estimable, journal has allowed him to keep in its columns a kind of diary, or log-book, relating all the little happenings on his farm. We know the names of his sheep and pigs, and the exact day and hour when the old hen hatched her chickens. If he plants out little trees we are told just how many, and where they were put. Also, we receive regular bulletins thereafter as to how they are getting on. If a blight appears on any of his vegetables, the whole

Province of Ontario has to hear about it, and be agitated by a daily account of the trouble until it is remedied. Thousands are vitally interested in what occurs at that homestead, which tends to occupy an analogous place in Canadian literary-historical annals to Horace's little Sabine farm in Latin literature.

So to hold an audience month after month, and year after year, with what is substantially the same tale every day, is the most remarkable feat ever accomplished by a writer in Canada. At first glance one is aware of the apparent egotism of it. Why should we bother reading that "the orchard has been thoroughly disced," or that "if all goes well there should be a great yield of honey in this district"? Certainly not for any value these articles have as crop reports, or treatises on scientific farming, as their author is the first to acknowledge.

But, when Peter McArthur says: "I write for a living and farm to amuse my neighbours," he is giving us the truth in a much distorted form. The accurate word would have been "entertain," not "amuse"; for the farm, while small and having only modest buildings and equipment, is well run. It yields regular and satisfactory crops, and there is nothing un-

usual about it, nor ridiculous in its operation. Furthermore, the entertained include not only his neighbours, but also his many thousands of readers who have never penetrated the boundaries of Ekfrid Township. Still, if the author is right in calling Canada "the land of good neighbours," then he is quite justified in using the word to cover all his readers, because every one of them feels neighbourly towards their thoroughly wholesome, common-sensed, old friend, who converses with them so simply—and perpetually. And while his pen is, and always has been, the mainstay of his income, journalism and authorship have meant to him much more than a means of livelihood. As we have seen already in the case of the poems, it is impossible to make a careful study of his writings without realizing that some of them, at least, are the result of self-conscious effort toward a definite ideal. Beneath all his shallow journalism there is clearly visible the sincere and thoughtful artist.

The secret of the popularity of the "farm" articles lies in the richness of Peter McArthur's personality. He has a few firm convictions, but does not take life too seriously. He is possessed of a genial, easy, and habitual sense

of humour. He moralizes a good deal as he mows his hay or picks his fruit, but we are pretty sure that in a minute or two his kindly brown eyes will be twinkling under their bushy brows, and he will be telling us about something that one of his boys did. And pretty soon he will be going in to dinner, which he will enjoy with as much abandon as the most simple farm hand.

It is only great men whom we can stand to hear talking everlastingly of themselves, and of the vital trivialities of their lives. We have been enduring this kind of thing from Michael de Montaigne for four hundred years, and he holds us still. Similarly, when we pick up the *Globe* of May 16th, 1921, and read: "Yesterday there was a minute or two of excitement after we turned the sheep out of the orchard into the pasture field," we are all eyes to see what happened. When we learn that it was nothing but one of the lambs lost for a few minutes, and soon found asleep under a tree, we do not feel defrauded. We have had a thrilling adventure, or have been hypnotized into thinking so. Fundamentally, Montaigne and Peter McArthur are akin in that they both are able to raise, and constantly do raise, the

immediate and common to a place of enduring charm.

Whereas style is the universal preservative for words, and in it we might reasonably search for an explanation of the continued tolerance of Peter McArthur's chatter; and whereas there is always in him a latent, and sometimes an active, artist at work, the motive back of his present grip upon his public lies elsewhere. This mass of material does not represent an exercise in technique. What literature has been produced has been a by-product of his propaganda for that "back to the land" movement which he began single-handed after his return to Canada—his very real Hegira, the turning point in his career.

Behind these articles and books celebrating rural life is the author's basic belief that the balance of population between the towns and the country is all wrong. Instead of eighty per cent. of the people being in the towns, as at present, he thinks the majority of the inhabitants of Canada should be on the land actually producing their own food. The essence of his warning may be summed up in Oliver Goldsmith's lines:

"But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied."

So Peter McArthur is trying to keep farmers' sons on the land, and to induce city men to go there wherever it is feasible in the individual case. Hence this deluge of notes on the weather and on the fauna and flora discovered by the author, with such delightful naivete, upon the parental acres.

Some of this prose was of timely interest only; much of it was written under the pressure of journalistic necessity; a tremendous proportion of it is downright poor; but the cream of it makes us pause. In homeliness of diction, and in their wealth of terse, countryside phrases, the abler prose passages of Peter McArthur have an abiding strength. In writing out of his own experience, and with utter simplicity, he has complied with the first two requisites for the making of a classic. Possibly some of his compositions will live—at least as a mine of Canadian twentieth-century folk-speech—when much of the more pretentious contemporary literature shall have perished in the quicksands that are for ever waiting to swallow the work of authors.

There is a sense in which Peter McArthur

represents the common denominator of Canadian character and language in his generation. And, knowing most phases of the national life, he has specialized on recording and commenting upon the details of Canada's basic activity. "Agriculture, the most essential of the world's industries," he writes, "has not been touched by the true glamour of literature and art."* His aim has been to supply the lack. As a natural result his words, growing out of the very soil of his own farm, are indigenous to Canada to a degree that few other of our literary products are. So, when Janey Canuck said: "It is a pity that the workers are so frequently inarticulate, thus leaving their joys and sorrows to be imperfectly sensed by onlookers," she evidently overlooked, or at least forgot to except, the farmer whose life has been dedicated to that very task. "The first year I was doing the 'farm' articles," remarked Peter McArthur one day, "I used to get letters of appreciation from college professors and literary people: I was writing from observation then. The next year I was doing the work myself, and I started to get letters from farmers." Spon-

*"In Pastures Green," p. 200.

taneous response from a fellow labourer is to him the most valued form of compliment.

One understands readily enough how such a sketch as "Calf Feeding" would appeal to those familiar with similar farm comedies. It is not so obvious why the multitude of quotations from Milton and Shakespeare—to say nothing of more pedantic allusions—should be acceptable to a non-literary audience. If his popularity is due to the richness of his personality, as formerly stated, it is likely that his rural admirers sense the philosopher in him and realize that the interspersions of fragments from the classics are not used to "show off" his learning, but are an effort to draw from the greatest minds of the past those truths which will best help the farmer to attain a more satisfactory attitude towards life; to teach him the principles of that self-reliance which breeds self-respect; to induce him to take broader views; and, above all, to take more pleasure in his work. For Peter McArthur believes that what is most needed on the farm is not so much a change of conditions as a different outlook. "Farming is a great art, and the artist works with life, rather than with pig-

ments or words. He gets his effects by working in accord with nature."* In its wider significance, the philosophy with which he seeks to imbue his fellow farmer is essentially the same as that expressed in the sonnets.

That awareness of the continuity of life, without which an artist's work tends to be paltry and meaningless, appears in Peter McArthur's prose writings in both its metaphysical and historical aspects. Illustrating the former, we have not only his frequent avowal of kinship with the birds and animals of his woodlot, but also these two striking passages: "I know that the life stirring in the innumerable roots of the grass and the myriad seeds and the swelling buds is the same life that is flushing me with joy."† "The glorious spring we are having just now makes me feel in my bones that there is something about the season of growth that the scientists have not yet discovered. When everything is alive, from the grain of mustard seed to the mighty oak, and everything is bursting into life and bloom, I always feel that there are other forces at work besides heat and moisture. Wherever I turn, things seem to be flooded with life, as if life

*"In Pastures Green," p.41. †"In Pastures Green," p.68

were a form of force like electricity—something too all-pervading and subtle to be isolated by scientific investigators. Life seems to be something apart from the chemical changes that take place in the seeds—something that compels these changes, but does not enter into the combination itself."*

Historically, Peter McArthur links the life of his community to the rest of the unverse through his knowledge of, and admiration for, the pioneering generation that preceded him. Their fame he would keep alive; their virtues he would inculcate into his contemporaries. From their motives for settling in the then wilderness of Canada, he draws one of the lessons he loves best to teach: "No one who has made a study of the pioneers of Ontario can doubt for a moment the inspiration of their toil. They wanted homes. They knew, as generations before them knew, what it meant to be tenants—subject to the whims and oppressions of landlords or their agents."† His whole attitude towards farming is centred, consequently, on the idea that it should be a home-

*"In Pastures Green," p. 116.

†"In Pastures Green," p. 43.

making rather than a money-making undertaking.

"Labour that knows the seed time and its hope,
And waits the harvest with a trusting soul—
Strong in its faith with every ill to cope,
Trusting in God and his benign control—
Scorning the slavery in which they grope,
Blind and defeated, who make wealth their goal—
Such would I sing for he who looks may see
The end of labour is to make men free.

"And, being free, with clothing, food, and shelter,
What, that is toil-bought, would you envy more?
Why should you struggle in the human welter?
Why should you sink when you were meant to soar?
Life has been made a hurried helter-skelter
Of aimless effort without guiding lore.
Believe me, friend, though you have wealth past measure,
Living itself is life's completest treasure.

"If some good people would but take the time
To look about them they would be surprised
To find their house of life is more sublime
Than poet ever feigned or sage surmised.
Stop and look forth! It will not be a crime!
And if you think I have not well advised—
Preferring some one who of toiling proses—
Back to the grindstone with your stupid noses.

"Our fathers toiled, but in a glorious fight,
The God of Nations led them by the hand,
With pillared smoke by day and fire by night
They wrought like heroes in their Promised Land;
The wilderness was conquered by their might,
They made for God the marvel He had planned—
A land of homes where toil could make men free,
The final masterpiece of Destiny.

"How can I rest when they will not be still?
When every wind is vocal with their sighs
Breathed to my ear from every funeral hill
And from each field where one forgotten lies?
They haunt my steps and burden me until
I plead with hands outsretched and streaming eyes:
'I am not worthy! Let my lips be dumb!
The mighty song and singer yet shall come!'

"The well-greaved Greeks and Priam's savage brood
Were not more worthy of immortal song
Than these in homespun, who alone withstood
Hunger and Fear to make our Freedom strong;
But till the singer comes, at least the good
They wrought we must from age to age prolong;
Learning from them, let this our watchword be:
Free from all tyrants from yourselves be free."

Since this is a critical estimate of the work of one who is a maker of Canadian literature, it will not do to dwell upon the publicist, nor to emphasize his subtle influence upon the thought and life of his time. But he has been so much more generally thought of as a village sage than as a verbal artist that it is impossible to approach the purely literary aspect of the "farm" articles save by means of an understandng of their utilitarian purpose. Some hints have been thrown out that this interminable essay sequence does contain literature, and we must now enquire on what such claims are founded, since its author makes

no pretense that it is of the slightest literary value.

Our task is lightened to some extent by Peter McArthur's action in editing and issuing collections of his *Globe* articles in two volumes entitled "In Pastures Green" and "The Red Cow." By confining our attention to these we dispose automatically of much that was trivial and not worth preservation; and while it is likely that some choice material has been jettisoned, the body of work included in these two books may be taken as thoroughly representative.

"In Pastures Green" is the earlier and better book. While actually a composite of the writings of several years, it purports to be a diary covering the happenings of a single year. It opens with January and continues in an orderly fashion till Christmas, thus acquiring a cohesion and a logical progression that "The Red Cow" has not, nor have any other series of articles as they appeared in the newspaper. This unification of the group known as "In Pastures Green" gives us the right to think of it as an original work of some magnitude, and we may, with propriety, discuss it as a conception.

From the sweep of the seasons, merging into one another—almost imperceptibly—with appropriate scenic detail, and corresponding gradations of tone, we obtain justification for the use of the word epic. The book contains a complete cycle of inevitable events inextricably involved with the ebb and flow of human thought and emotion accompanying them; it tells of seed time and harvest, and these are eternal things, far more majestic and fateful than any military exploit.

"In Pastures Green" is probably the best portrait extant of average, normal, contemporary life in rural Canada. As realism, the narrative contained in these pages is wonderful. The author, with eyes and ears open, has gone about pen in hand, and noted down what he saw and heard. A hawk may appear on the scene: in goes the hawk, regardless of the reader's possible lack of interest in hawks, or of the fact that the bird may have no relation whatsoever to anything else during the entire year. The result is a transcription from life, accurate in a way that must make the producer of realistic fiction weep with impotent envy. The "great Canadian novel" of which these realists dream—and talk—has not been pro-

duced. But it has been supserseded by Peter McArthur, the diarist.

The reader is apt to miss the grand outline while engrossed in the details. Petty incident and rambling comment reproduce so exactly the "daily round" that only the author's geniality and wit prevent the pages from becoming tiresome. The length, as well as the discursiveness of "In Pastures Green" assists in destroying the sense of unity. Perhaps this was intended. It is quite possible that Peter McArthur meant to lose his reader among the inconsequent hours, whose sum total spells life. If so, he has succeeded too well; for few, on laying down the book, will recall how gently and skilfully they have been led from the winter thaws to the spring frosts; through the sultry midsummer days to the opulence of harvest; and past this again to the end-of-the-year festivals of Thanksgiving and Christmas. Their minds will be filled instead with memories of individual bits of landscape, with shadow patterns that play under the trees in the orchard, and the smell of new-cut hay, and with faint echoes of merriment over humourous passages. Yet the beauty and significance of the book lies rather in the inner consistency of the year-

long drama, so unobtrusive in its daily progress and so thoroughly typical of the most stable and satisfying things in Canadian life.

"The Red Cow" exhibits none of the amplitude of "In Pastures Green," but is a first-rate index of the popularity of its author. In its manner of compilation, it is unique. Having decided to publish a further series of sketches, McArthur discovered that he had lost his scrap book containing the clippings of his *Globe* articles. He mentioned the fact in his column on the editorial page and requested readers, who had preserved specimens of his work, to send him their favourites. From the material sent him "The Red Cow" was put together.

It is, as might be expected, a collection of the brighter (and lighter) bits. It is composed almost entirely of passages descriptive of the animals on the farm. They are all here, from the now famous Fenceviewer I, who gives the book its title, to the cats and the poultry. In these pieces, of all McArthur's work, there is the most obvious appeal; and that appeal is due to the element of humour.

Peter McArthur's humour is one of the three things of life-long duration, as we have seen. It is what first brought him financial returns;

it opened the way for his journalistic career in New York, and proved his mainstay in London. It enabled him to keep his magazine, *Ourselves,* alive for the seven issues of its existence. It contributed largely to his success in establishing a perennial audience for the "farm" articles, and is often the sugar coating which induces us to swallow his more serious preachments. It is a factor so constantly recurring that it cannot in any wise be ignored, even by taking a lofty view that might overlook the fact that his present popularity is so much dependent upon it.

Yet the humour is not the man, but his tool. The gift of humour he has. His eye is quick to perceive the ridiculous in any situation: his clever brain can shape the pithy, telling phrase that will reveal it most effectively. He began as a joke-maker, and, had he so desired, he might have continued plying that trade until he had the reputation of a Bill Nye or an Artemus Ward. But, as is evident from the whole trend of his career, his desire lay in other directions. Possibly he feared that he might descend to the cheap and vulgar levels to which many professional humourists gravitate. The fineness and subtlety of his mind would probably

have insured him against such a catastrophe, but, in any case, it is more likely that he has avoided the easy path to wealth and notoriety for another reason. The impulse of the teacher is strong in him. We have seen how the majority of his poems are of a didactic turn: we have to think of the whole range of his "farm" articles as glorified propaganda on a gigantic scale. So, when he writes:

"Laughter and silence for a sword and shield!" *

it is easy to imagine the essentially reserved man protecting himself from personal onslaught by reticence about the more intimate things of his life, and, at the same time, thrusting with the mighty weapon of laughter in ardent battle for those ideas which he cherishes, and against those which he abhors.

The principal thing for which he stands is the upbuilding of the national character. Directly or indirectly, all his millions of words simply amount to this, that he desires that there shall be on this soil a free and happy people, emancipated from all tyranny—whether it be the tyranny of militarism or in-

* "Questionings" from "The Prodigal," p. 21.

dustrialism or superstition—and a people whose prosperity and well-being are founded on a natural and spontaneous mode of life. Actuated by that ideal, he has sought to immerse himself in the common life of the countryside, which is, we gather from his writings, the nearest approach man has made to that ideal. Hence he throws away, as a little thing, the chance to make a name for himself, and amass dollars, by being a funny man. For humour comes from brilliance. It is a mark of individuality, causing one to shine and sparkle in contrast to his fellows. Peter McArthur has proved conclusively that he could have done that had he so wished. But, possibly noticing that one red clover does not scintillate among a field of them, he came to the conclusion that the unique specimen was not as important as the mass life, a conclusion with which the eminent psychologist, Havelock Ellis, heartily agrees.

So, while he still uses his gift of humour to feather his shafts in argument, as well as to win and hold the attention of his wide circle of readers, he never treats it as an end in itself. Consequently, instead of turning into the clown, he has repressed the comic element,

with the result that his humour has become what humour should be, a spice to the dish, a fine flavour making palatable the more nutritious part of the confection. And that is why his humour has a permanent appeal that exaggerated mimicry can never attain. His humour is elusive. It plays in and out of his writing; is now felt far below the surface, too deep for guffaw or even smile, and again, unexpectedly, comes bubbling through with its cheering note of nonchalance, whimsicality or satire. It cannot be judged by itself, for the finest and most enduring of it is inextricably mixed with the matter which it leavens.

The essays comprising "The Red Cow," considered singly, show better balance and cohesion than the fragments going to make up "In Pastures Green," but their association is almost fortuitous. Certainly there is no such compelling bond uniting them as exists in the earlier book. "The Red Cow" is distinguished by its humour, which is of the obviously amusing variety, and therefore below the higher type, which interpenetrates the greater part of "In Pastures Green." "The Red Cow," on the whole, is an entertaining collection, though the fun falls a little flat at times. It contains,

also, a dozen splendid bits of descriptive writing, like "The Saplings" and "A Spring Shower," which are to be found in the anthology, together with "The Boy and the Oak," so lovely in its delicacy.

In view of this, it is apparent why the humourist is placed below the essayist in importance, and much below the poet. Starting as a writer of jokes for funny papers, he has come to the point not only where humour is but one of his many instruments of expression, but to that refinement of humour which is a play of fine shadings and nuances. By using his "sword" enough, but not too much, he has kept it bright so that we are constantly being cheered by its flashes of reflected sunlight. And, when he wishes, it can, and does, strike deep.

This story of the partial disappearance of the funny man, with its attempted explanation, has its counterpart in the increasing submergence of the verbal artist. His conscious aim seems to be to kill out that desire for perfection of form which gave us the sonnets, from a fear of becoming isolated mentally in a literary world foreign to the every-day sphere to which he has so patently dedicated himself. Under-

neath all is the inherent feeling for form that will not let the man alone; and between the two is a strange conflict. When editor of *Truth*, his feeling was all "art for art's sake." Now, he would probably endorse the dictum of G. K. Chesterton: "Art for life's sake; art for God's sake."

For a long time it has been apparent that Peter McArthur feared that his work was going to smell of the lamp, become "literary" in a way that would defeat his ambition of reflecting and interpreting rural life. In his search for the homely, the natural and the unacademic, he has certainly managed to infuse freshness into his style. When we come upon some terse, native proverb, like: "It's the still pig that gets the swill,"* we must be ever grateful to him for remaining "one of the people" to the extent that makes such salvaging possible. But, for all the charming casualness of his later style, the change has not been wholly profitable. The customary prose of recent years is discursive, prolix and loosely constructed. It is often marred by solecisms, and sometimes by grammatical inaccuracies. Charged with these faults, the literary icono-

* "In Pastures Green," p. 265.

clast in Peter McArthur would spring to the surface and tell his accuser flatly that these things do not matter in the least; that fine literature is bosh; that style is an inconsequential thing, of interest only to a small group of pedants, who have nothing better to think of. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt but that the artist in him must berate him soundly at times, because Peter McArthur, had he so chosen, could have developed one of the smoothest and most correct, as well as one of the most forceful, of literary styles.

But style does matter: it is what makes the re-reading of worthy books pleasurable. And Peter McArthur has erred to his own hurt in neglecting to prune his essays with the same care with which he prevents the haphazard growth of branches from the trunks of his apple trees. Shrewd enough to see the advantage of plucking the majority of the blossoms in his orchard that the remainder may develop into larger and finer fruits, he yet neglects, a great portion of the time, to apply the same principle to his word crop. Whatever sprouts is all too apt to be allowed to grow as best it may upon the overloaded branch. The inevitable result is a decrease in the quality

of the individual literary fruits. When he takes fifty words to say what might be more effectively expressed in fifteen, or even five, he is doing his best to defeat his chances of survival, unmindful, apparently, that one large, juicy, perfectly formed apple is worth more than a whole barrel of scrubs.

The pity of it is that this tendency to give us his real thought scattered thinly through yards of idle gossip is not the result of carelessness altogether, but is in part the deliberate outcome of his recently developed theories, of that increasing contempt for literary form which is expressed or implied in much of his later writing.

For Peter McArthur is a born phrase maker. "One of the blessings of being a humourist is that all your mistakes pass off as jokes," he wrote twenty-one years ago.* If he wished to say the same thing to-day he would probably make a paragraph of it, or possibly it would be extended to the length of an essay. His meaning—once so clearly expressed—we would have to gather from a series of anecdotes. Considering the number of original, bright or profound things he has said, and his ability to

*"To be Taken With Salt."

construct epigrams, it is remarkable how few of his sayings can be removed from their context in the form of a single sentence—significant, telling and complete. Verily, when hunting for verbal gems in Peter McArthur's later compositions, one is forcibly reminded of the counsel of Heraclitus: "Those who seek after gold dig up a lot of earth and find a little."

His present aversion to striking sentences is evidently founded on the correct belief that mere cleverness is frivolous and ephemeral, and on the erroneous belief that a graphic, illuminating turn of speech must be the result of mere cleverness. In his commendable striving for the simple and natural, he fears the artificial and gaudy. In his zeal he fails to distinguish between the natural and the slipshod. Nor does he realize that the favour which compact, polished, forceful phrasing enjoys from the "literary" is the just reward of the essential economy of that mode of speech, and its consequent superiority as an instrument of recorded thought over the looser diction we all employ carelessly in our hasty, unconsidered, every-day talk. This mistake was not made by his early prototype, the rural philosopher and man of letters, Henry Thoreau.

As an example of the two manners, the poem to the pioneers, quoted above, will do nicely. There is not space here for an analysis of the poem, but in it the student of Peter McArthur will find nearly all his excellencies and defects. It is characteristically uneven. Powerful lines and strong phrases are mixed with banalities, clichés, hackneyed expressions and the cheap coin of poesy. In tone, it falls from the lofty and serene to the colloquial and facetious; and jumps back again to the heroic and impassioned. Yet in it are several of those shining epigrams that, could they but be rescued from their context, would ensure their author's name being handed down to posterity:

"Living itself is life's completest treasure."*

Similarly, but on the opposite facet of this matter, we find a quotation from Keats inserted in a frothy, burlesqued account of an interview with a film magnate.†

The easy conclusion that Peter McArthur's best work is a thing of the past is estopped by the appearance in 1920 of "The Affable Stranger," which contains the most serious

*"In Pastures Green," p. 331.
†"The Affable Stranger," p. 47.

pronouncements he has ever made, framed in the most concise and able prose he has yet produced. While his innate impishness has dictated many an unexpected word and passage, some of which appear ill-placed, "The Affable Stranger" unquestionably is the author's most important book—and his best one, according to all recognized standards of what English prose should be.

The book sets out to investigate the causes of irritation then existing among Canadians against the inhabitants of the United States. It carries an implied plea that both nations act hereafter with more deliberation, and speak more courteously to and about each other. But, as we have seen, Peter McArthur is temperamentally unfit to construct a logical, concise (or dull) treatise on any subject. So not more than a quarter of the space is devoted to the avowed theme. The remainder is a collection of essays on diverse matters. "The Accused" is Peter McArthur's strongest prose offering. It is based on the idea that the old conception of justice is an impossible ideal; and that love is a much more expeditious solvent for international difficulties. "Prince Kropotkin's Cow" shows the ridiculous practical

side of that socialism which looks so well when considered as abstract theory. "A World Drama," "A World for Sale," "Organized for Profit," "A Majority will be Saved," "Loyalty," "Many Inventions" and "The Soul of Canada" should all be salvaged from among the lighter material, most of which is doomed because of its purely timely appeal.

"Sir Wilfrid Laurier," while having some value as a portrait of our great statesman by one who knew him well, has little merit as literature. These impressions were hastily, and somewhat carelessly thrown together immediately after Sir Wilfrid's death. Their casualness conveys the feeling of intimacy which the author had in mind, but they do not exhibit the clear, orderly progression which the biography of so prominent a man should. The book runs to anecdote, and has other features which tend to make it repetitious. Therefore, though it perpetuates the record of the author's friendship with the Premier, and will be prized by others who knew him personally, it cannot be considered one of Peter McArthur's major works.

Peter McArthur has published a good deal of fiction in periodicals, but is deficient in that

kind of creative ability. As an example of how poor a story can be, and still manage to get published, the reader is referred to "With the Aid of the Widow."* This tale shows, too, that as a writer of romance the author is a hopeless failure. When he wishes to perpetrate a satire, he is quite adept at shaping his plot and devising the dialogue. His best work in short story form consists of political burlesques, like "Jim Cook's Vote,"† and stories framed to point some more general moral, such as "A Moral Bully."‡ Another very fine example of the type of fiction that suits his powers is the sequence, "Tales of Millionaires," published in *Truth*.

In 1921 a small book, "The Last Law—Brotherhood," came from his pen. It is an advertisement for life insurance, in the form of a series of short essays, and written evidently on the same theory as "A Chant of Mammonism." It is an able treatise and well written. The history of the development of life insurance is interesting, and the author's theory that insurance is the one democratic form of high finance deserves more recognition than

* Canadian Magazine, July, 1913.
†"Ourselves," October, 1910.
‡"Ourselves," June, 1911.

it has received. Mention should also be made of his essay, "Public Opinion and Political Life," in "The New Era in Canada." This is outstanding, both as literature and current history, and it is a great satisfaction to know that it will always be available to readers through the media of the public libraries. Though it is too long for the anthology, no student of the man should overlook it.

Three points about Peter McArthur's work remain to be mentioned. The first is his independence of thought. For all his kindly tolerance, he is an aggressive adversary; and he stands as ready to criticize a labour union or a farmers' organization as a trust or a bank. For example: "The path of progress is now blocked by the farmer."* Self-appointed critic of Canadian customs and institutions, his pointed satire is feared by foemen as much as it is enjoyed by friends and non-combatants. In his day he has laughed out of that larger court, in which the whole public is jury, many a cause or movement he considered inimical to the public welfare. Brave he is, and self-reliant, an unobtrusive, though very real factor in Canada's development. And he

*"The Stubborn Farmer," from the *Forum*, New York, March, 1912.

has never asked for any reward for his services. What public offices he has been offered, he has refused, preferring to remain a free lance reformer, and to retain his reputation for impartiality and disinterestedness. Thus he stands free, independent—a mocking terror to self-seekers of any platform who attempt to exploit the nation for their own ends.

Remembering that Emerson said: "Consistency is the bane of little minds," Peter McArthur has never troubled about the small consistencies of his speech. Thus very different accounts of wood-cutting are given in the *Globe* of February 8th, 1923, and on pages 7 to 12 of "In Pastures Green." Sheep and pigs are assigned contradictory characteristics on pages 209 and 265 of "In Pastures Green" to the ones credited to them in "The Red Cow," on pages 89 and 133, respectively. But it is easy to see that the fun poked at Prince Kropotkin* for proposing that citizens raise food by working on the farm for shifts of twenty-five days per annum is not a weapon that takes off the scoffer's head for his own proposal: "Why should not every young man and woman in the country be compelled to

*"The Affable Stranger," p. 123.

spend, say, three years in the production of the necessaries of life?" *

The obvious difference between the suggestions is that the practical farmer knows youths could become efficient farm hands in three years, where they would only be nuisances for periods of twenty-five days. And in the larger way there is no inconsistency in Peter McArthur, even though he sometimes thinks and says to-day what he contradicts on the maturer reflections of some to-morrow. He lives the simple, care-free life he advocates for others. The only dangerous form of inconsistency—that flowing from hypocrisy—would be impossible to the man.

Finally, it should be noted that, like all great poets and many philosophers, Peter McArthur is a symbolist. Not only does he exclaim:

"Save in symbols can the truth be found?"†

but it is clear that he treats all things as mere emblems of the life within. The fecund life of his grain-fields and wood-lot entrances him because it is a manifestation of the creative fertility of the Deity on higher planes of being.

*"In Pastures Green," p. 179.
†"Courage," from "The Prodigal," p. 26.

His main concern is the true relationship of man to the universe; and man's relationship to things, and even to men, is a lesser problem included in the greater. Physical objects and events are, to him, mere "shadows" of the spiritual realities; and these inner truths, with which he is quietly preoccupied, are eternal, and not subject to change or error. When he rejoices in the rest to be found in rural surroundings, it is because that rest typifies the soul at peace with the Great Heart throbbing through all nature. He loves the songs of the birds as a reminder of the harmony that should (and probably does) exist basically between all things. He never descends to the use of allegory, but, like the wise man he is, weaves his symbols for those of enlightened spiritual perception to interpret as they read.

So, haltingly and imperfectly, we have reached the end of a difficult study. A Peter McArthur has been revealed who is not the Peter McArthur of popular imagination. We have exalted the little-known poet who, at his best, is eminently worthy of respect. We have discounted the jokesmith, and elevated the philosopher as one meriting serious consider-

ation. We have unearthed from the mound of his facile journalism the literary artist; and though we have traced the decline of his artistic conscience, it has been with the hope, strengthened to faith by the late appearance of "The Affable Stranger," that this author's more noteworthy achievements are in the future. What he will do no man can say. Other books are in preparation, and a new estimate may be needed when they appear. But it is safe to assume that whatever Peter McArthur shall at any time bring forth will be sincere, interesting, and, in its inmost essence, thoroughly Canadian.

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LINES

Small leather-covered edition printed privately by Mr. Vaux in 1901, 28 pages. Contains 17 sonnets to be found in "The Prodigal," together with one, "Prefatory," and four lyrics, "Man," "Pythoness," "The Bride" and "Carpe Diem" not to be found elsewhere.

TO BE TAKEN WITH SALT: BEING AN ESSAY ON TEACHING ONE'S GRANDMOTHER TO SUCK EGGS

Published by Limpus Baker & Co., London, 1903. Very rare. Most of the contents were reprinted in "Ourselves." Green cloth, 5 x 7½ inches.

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